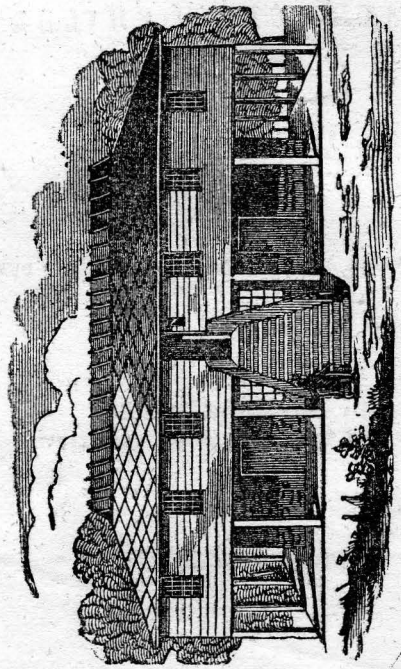

KAW MENDI MISSION HOUSE.

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LETTERS

TO

SABBATH-SCHOOL CHILDREN

ON

AFRICA:

WRITTEN WHILE ON A MISSION TO AFRICA, AND DURING A VISIT HOME.

By GEORGE THOMPSON,
MISSIONARY TO MENDI MISSION, WEST AFRICA.

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LETTERS

TO

SABBATH-SCHOOL CHILDREN

ON

AFRICA.

LETTER I.

JOY AT RETURNING TO AFRICA—VERSES.

My Dear Children.

I am again in Africa, the land of my adoption. I love it. I love the people—not because they are lovely in all their habits and ways, but because they are oppressed, crushed, injured, despised, benighted; and yet docile, kind, interesting. I love to labor and suffer for them. I love to see their minds brighten, their souls enlarge, their habits reform. I love to see the darkness flee away, and the light of the Gospel advance through the land. I love to see the idols* cast down, and abandoned for the knowledge and worship of the true God. I love, Oh, I *love* to hear those talk and pray who

* We have nearly fifty of their stone idols, of various shapes and sizes.

have emerged out of darkness into the glorious light of the Gospel. Your hearts would leap for joy, could you hear many of the *children* tell what God has done for *them*, and what they mean to do for *him*.

Yes, children, I am here, with my wife and two children. We had a very boisterous passage across the ocean. At times we thought that we should all go to the bottom, and never see the land and people of our desire. But our dear, kind, heavenly Father watched over and protected us, and brought us safely over the trackless deep.

When we first discovered the towering mountains of Africa in the distance, our hearts rejoiced, and we praised the Lord. Some of the ladies thought that the sight was the most beautiful and enrapturing that they had ever beheld. It was truly refreshing to us all, after tossing unceasingly to and fro, without seeing land, for almost five weeks. "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

The day before we reached Africa, I was up at "mast-head," looking out eagerly for land. While sitting there my thoughts reverted back to the many Sabbath-school children I had left, when I departed to labor for the benighted.

And as I mused upon the land I was approaching, and thought of you all, the following little verses were written, for you who love Africa to sing, with the hope that while singing your hearts might glow with more ardent pity for those who sit in darkness.

AFRICA CALLING.

AIR—"*There is a happy land.*"

There is a pleasant land
Far o'er the sea,
Where flowers are ever fanned
By breezes free.
There golden sands are found,
Rich, delicious fruits abound,
And Spring, the year around,—
In Africa.

But dismal darkness reigns
O'er all this land;
Oppressed with torturing pains,
By wicked hand.
They know no Saviour's love,
Sent to sinners from above,
But in their darkness rove,
A wretched band.

A few illuming rays
From Calvary,
In Gospel "Latter days,"
Some faintly see.

To us they lift their cry,
"Come and help us, ere we die;
O Christians, to us fly,—
In Africa.

"Come teach us of your God,
Teach us to pray;
Tell of Jesus' blood,
Who died, you say.
On him we will believe,
And our gree-gree worship leave;
Our idols, that deceive,
We'll cast away."

ANSWER.

"We hear this loud appeal,
Far, far away;
Our hearts shall deeply feel,
And for them pray.
We'll *labor* for them, too —
'Lord, what wilt thou have me do?'
Oh, wilt thou let me go
To Africa?

"We'll help those who have gone
From home, away;
Who toil and suffer on
From day to day,
To make the Gospel known,
In the burning, 'Torrid Zone'—
Lord, let thy kingdom come,—
In Africa."

Now, dear children, when you sing these

verses in your schools, you will think of us, and I hope you will be stirred up to labor, and pray more zealously for the spread of the Gospel in all Africa, and throughout the world.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER II.

CHILDREN IN FREETOWN—VERSES.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

Thinking that a few words about the children of Freetown (capital of Sierra Leone), may be interesting to you, I will tell you what I saw of them, while waiting there during four weeks.

When I was there five years ago, I met large numbers of them in their schools, and talked to them on temperance, taught temperance songs, etc. Hundreds of them signed the pledge, never to drink, or give to others, any thing that intoxicates.

At this time, while visiting some of the large schools, I heard them recite, and sing, and go through various exercises. After a while the teacher (who was a student at the time of my first visit to Africa, and then heard the lectures

on temperance, and learned the songs) said to them, "Now, can't you sing a temperance song?" And to my great surprise and delight, they readily struck up, and sung with spirit, some of the old pieces I had taught in Freetown, years before. There were hundreds of the little ones, from five to ten years old, and it was delightful to see and hear them.

Then we came out into the room of the larger children, and heard them sing. In the school were two little girls, to whom I had taught, three years before, some particular hymns and tunes. I suspected that they had taught them to their companions, and said, "Now let me see how many of you can sing, '*Eden of Love.*'" What was my surprise, to hear nearly the whole school strike in and sing it briskly! And it was the same with some other tunes, which they had no way of getting, except through those two girls.

Mr. Burton and myself met several large schools, to teach them some principles of music, and our American tunes. They took hold with great interest, and learned very readily. Many of them remembered me, and were eager to get hold of my hand. There are many very interesting children in Sierra Leone, who will, I hope, be very useful.

As you heard of the sailing of a number of missionaries to the Mendi Mission, for which you are praying, and to which you are giving, you wished that you knew their names. Below I send them to you, in rhyme. These verses were written by one of the ladies, while we were on our passage to this country. She named them,

A BOX OF JEWELS.

We're bound for Afric's sunny clime,
Our company in number nine —
The name of each you now shall hear;
And first George Thompson doth appear;
Then Martha* comes, with happy cheer,
With George and Moses, children dear;
And Officer,† with humble heart,
Is bound to share a noble part;
Then Doctor Cole,‡ with right good will,
To help us all when we are ill;
And Burton,‖ with a cheerful voice,
With Lizzy,§ makes the goodly choice,
And Nancy, their adopted one,
To dwell beneath a tropic sun;
And Mary,¶ too, has left friends dear,
The darkened mind with light to cheer;
Then meek Mahala,** quiet, mild,
Is bound for Afric's savage wild;

* My wife, Martha C. Thompson. † Morris Officer.
‡ T. G. Cole, M. D. ‖ D. W. Burton. § Elizabeth, his wife.
¶ Mary B. Aldrich. ** Mahala Maguire.

LOVISA* a true friend will be,
As in the future you shall see.

One of our number, a lady from Iowa, wrote some verses to the Sabbath-school which she left. They were written on the ocean, while thinking of the assembled children. And as she kindly gave me permission, I gladly send them to you all, knowing that you will be pleased with them.

THOUGHTS ON A SABBATH-SCHOOL.

Far, in my native land,
(Though I'm away),
I see a happy band,
This holy day.
Oh, there I'd love to be,
Happy thus you all to see,
A smiling company,
Dear Sabbath-school.

Far from your happy band
Though we may stray,
We'll trust a Saviour's hand,
From day to day.
Oh, to your Saviour bring
Hearty, cheerful offering—
Long may your voices sing
A Saviour's love.

* Lovisa R. Sexton.

Though in a heathen land
We ever be;
Far in dark Afric's land,
Or on the sea—
Oh, will you ever pray,
Children dear, for those away,
"Lord, let them never stray,
Far, far away."

I know that my readers can not, and will not forget us. The thought that you are praying for us, cheers us greatly.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER III.

RECEPTION AT THE MISSION—BUGGY RIDE.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

Doubtless you will like to know how the people and children here received us when we arrived, and I will tell you. We left Freetown in a small vessel, which rolled very much and very unpleasantly. We were between three and four days getting to the mission, from which I had been absent nearly three years. The people were expecting us, and crowded the water-side to meet us. Many of the little boys

were so eager to be the first to greet us, that they plunged into the water, and swam far from the wharf to meet the canoe. Thus they came to us, like fish about our vessel, with faces beaming with gladness. They swam around, and played like ducks. They seem to know nothing about getting tired in the water; but will swim, and dive, and play for hours, if allowed, where they can touch no bottom.

When we came ashore, they crowded to get hold of our hands—men and women, boys and girls, old and young. The little hands were very thick, and all faces glowed with delight and gladness. Many of them were old acquaintances, and many faces were new, having come to the mission since I left. My two little boys were objects of great curiosity. Old and young had to come and shake their hands. It was a time of rejoicing with all.

When I saw the eager crowd, I could scarce refrain from weeping for joy. I could say but little, yet I praised the Lord in my heart, for bringing me safely again to my interesting, warm-hearted flock. Some of the old people came and threw their arms around and hung on my neck for some time. They said: "We all cry plenty for you come back. All this country people and the chiefs have cried for

you to come. Now you done come,* our hearts can *lay down*, and be cold. We joy too much (plenty) to see you come again to this country." The country people flocked in great numbers to see the new missionaries, and bid us welcome.

THE HORSE AND BUGGY.

I had brought with me a buggy from New York, and now bought a little African pony (about the size of a mule), in Freetown, and brought him here, to let the sick, and feeble, and worn, and languid of our number ride out in the cool of the day, to invigorate their health, and make them strong to work for God among this benighted people.

The people of this part of the country had never seen a horse, or a wagon. Both were a great wonder to them. When we took our first ride, the whole people turned out to behold the wonderful sight. They were afraid, and ran, and dodged, and screamed, and laughed, and shouted. The dogs were alarmed; they ran, and barked, and manifested as much amazement as the people. Parents held their children up in their arms, and tried to direct their attention to the wonder, that an impression might be made on their tender minds.

* Have already come—an idiom.

When we rode out, the multitude ran, before, and behind, and on each side, yelling and shouting, so that even the horse was frightened, and felt disposed to try his speed. It was very laughable to see all the various exhibitions of the motley crowd. And often, even now, they come from the country to see the wonder, of which they have heard. Many of them are very much afraid of the horse, and sometimes they run like deer into the bush, to get away, when they see us riding along.

The ladies value their ride very much. It does them much good, in the cool of the day. I had to make roads with the help of my school boys, before we could ride very far; but now we can ride three miles. It is very refreshing, after the cares and excessive labors of the day.

The Lord bless you, in the midst of all your comforts, but don't forget

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

In Africa, much more than in America, is some kind of recreation needed, and if every missionary could enjoy the luxury of a horse-back, or buggy ride, each day, or three times a week, it would be invaluable to the health of

man or woman, but especially to woman. And surely the friends of Africa will not grudge this comfort, so needful, to their weary, toiling, suffering missionaries, in sickly Africa, whenever it can be enjoyed. To persons recovering from sickness, its importance is unspeakable. It is better than all medicines. Many have suffered much for want of something of the kind.

LETTER IV.

LETTER FROM AN AFRICAN BOY.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

I have been much pleased since I came here, to see the progress of many of the children in our large school.

Many of you will remember hearing me read a very small letter, when I was in America, from a boy in the school here—the one that called me, "My dear George Thompson;" "My dear master in Africa;" "My dear preacher in Africa," etc. You saw it in the "Missionary," about the time I left. That boy has now written a letter to *you*, and handed it to me, to send to the Sabbath-school children in America. He came to me to-day, and requested me to excuse him from work, that he might write to

you. Of course I was glad to do so; and here follows his letter. The writing is beautiful—that of a penman. You will see from it, that he reads his Bible, and understands how to apply the promises of God.

MENDI MISSION, April 28, 1853.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

I have taken much pains to write these few words to you. Oh, dear children, when I was writing [about to write] these words, I asked the Lord's blessing, that "As we have opportunity, we might do good unto them who are of the household of faith."

I believe you have too much sense and honesty to make a profession of religion, further than your heart is really engaged; and that you will not do it to please your fellow-creatures.

Now, my dear friends, let us remember, that the "Lord is on our side—we will not fear. What can man do unto us?" For "the Lord taketh our part with them that help us; therefore shall we see our desire upon them that hate us." "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man. It is better to to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes." "Thou hast thrust sore at us, that

we might fall, but the Lord helped us." "The Lord is our strength and song, and is become our salvation."

Oh, my dear friends, "The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly," and I hope you will love the Lord, as I love him. I love the Lord because he hath died on the cross for me. He hath heard my voice, and my supplication, and hath inclined his ear unto me; therefore will I call upon him, as long as I live. "The Lord preserveth the simple. I was brought low, and he helped me; for he hath delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." Therefore, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believe, therefore have I spoken. I was greatly afflicted. I said in my haste, All men are liars." "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

This is all I have to say to you. Let us try to love the Lord, and when we die we will meet at the glorious home in heaven. I bid you all farewell.

Your affectionate friend,

C. T.

LETTER V.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM C. T.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

A few days ago I said something to our children here, about the Sabbath-school children in America. I told them how much you were doing for them, and how much interested you were in the spread of the Gospel among the benighted heathen; and especially in Africa. I said to them, "I wish that some of you would write some letters to the children in America. It would please them much, and encourage them to give and pray."

The next day two or three of them came to me, and wished to know to whom they should write. So I told one he might write to a Sabbath-school with which I was acquainted, in Ohio. Soon he brought me the following:

TO THE SABBATH-SCHOOL IN GRANVILLE, OHIO.

MENDI MISSION, May 5, 1853.

MY DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS:

When I was a heathen boy I did not know how to pray or read, but the Lord hath sent this mission here to teach us, and separate us from the heathen ways. So we are now going to school, that we may be Christian people.

Oh, my dear friends, while I am writing this letter, I don't know how much I feel for these heathen children around me. I feel very sorry. I have been to school all the time since Mr. Raymond preached to us about the Saviour. In two or three years I began to understand the English, and commenced praying—and soon I was in the first class. I learned how to write, and I thank the Lord for all that he has done for me in this mission. Oh, my dear friends, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth." And so his praise must be in yours too. "I behaved myself as though he had been my brother, or my friend. I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." And so you should bow down to him too. Do, brethren and sisters, let us bow down to him, as our mother's children.

Again: "He sent from above. He took me. He drew me out of many waters." And so, dear brothers and sisters, let us love the Lord.

Dear children, I hope you will try to learn these verses which I now write in this letter.

Look in the thirteenth psalm. "O Lord, how long wilt thou forget me? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having

sorrow in my heart, daily? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider, and hear me, O Lord, my God: lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; lest my enemy say, I have prevailed against him, and those that trouble me, rejoice when I am moved. But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me."

Oh, my dear friends, "the words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

Dear children, let us try, do let us try to love the Lord, and serve him, because "The foolish shall not stand in his sight. He hateth the workers of iniquity."

Dear friends, farewell. I hope you will pray for me, and I will pray for you.

Yours, truly,

C. T.

This boy was (at the date of the above) about twelve or thirteen years of age. Pray for us.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER VI.

LETTER FROM ANOTHER BOY.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

Another little boy has written a letter to Sabbath-school children, and handed it to me to send to you. I am always glad to forward letters to you from African youth, knowing that you are interested in reading them.

The boy who wrote the following letter is a mulatto, from Gallinas, that strong-hold of the Devil during many years, for slave-trading. His father (now dead) was a Frenchman or Spaniard; I can not certainly tell which. He was living on the coast as a slave-trader. His mother lives in this country, and is friendly to our mission. She belonged to the Tucker family. The boy was here, in the mission, when I first came to Africa, being then a very small boy. He is an interesting child, and learns very fast.

TO THE SABBATH-SCHOOL IN PUTNAM, OHIO.

MENDI MISSION, May 5, 1853.

MY DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS:

I hope you are well, and all your families, parents, etc. Please to pray for us, that we may all be converted, and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. I am a boy, who has been in the

mission school about four or five years. I hope all of you will know much of learning, that you may come to us, as our dear missionaries. The Saviour has died for all of us poor wretched sinners, and we have nothing to pay him. Oh, then, we should admire, and love, and obey him, for all his goodness to us. Oh, don't forget us in all your morning and evening prayers, and we will not forget you.

I am trying my best to get learning, that I may send the Gospel to others also. I don't know how to write well, but that which I am able to do, I can do. I hope that your Sabbath-school children may increase in learning, more and more. I hope all of you may be blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Try to love the Lord, my dear brothers and sisters, that all of us, when we die, may go prepared to meet our dear Saviour.

Your Brother,

T. T.

Now, dear children, are you not interested in the letter of this little boy? I hope soon to be able to send you some of the letters of the other children.

William Tucker, whose letters you have often read, is now living at Mo Tappan (near Tissana), at the rapids on Big Boom river, as an

assistant to Mr. Brooks, who is carrying on a station at that place.

William teaches school, interprets, explains the Bible, and holds meetings himself, in the towns around, to talk to the people of the great salvation. He is a good interpreter, and a great help in the mission.

We have a number of other boys here who are able to assist in the school, and who, if the teachers are sick for a few days, can go forward with the school themselves.

Pray much for us, that *many* may be raised up here, to do great good in the world.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

CHILDREN DESCRIBED.

Our children are taken mostly from the heathen around. In their wild state, they all go entirely naked, till they are ten or twelve, or more years of age. "What!" do you say, "is it possible? Why don't they wear clothes? Why don't their parents clothe them?" Ah, children, they are HEATHEN. They have not *Bibles*, nor *ministers*, nor *Sabbath-schools*, nor *teachers*. The people are very ignorant and degraded, and train up their children in like manner. Many of them are glad to have their

children go to school and learn. They say, "We do not wish them to be *bush*-children, as we were, but learn sense."

When they bring their children to place them in school, they are without clothing, and wild. Many of them are much afraid of white faces, when they first come, and scream when we go near them, or when their parents leave to go home again; but they soon become calm, and by being with the other children, are interested and happy. We clothe them, and place them in the school, where they begin to learn A, B, C, in the same books *you* study, and soon learn to read.

When they first come, they can not speak or understand any English, but they very soon learn a few words, and in a few weeks can talk quite plainly. It is amusing when they first come to me to ask for a fish-hook, with which to go a-fishing. They have heard the name from the others, but they can not say, "Please to give me a hook," because they have not learned so many words; but they come to me, when they see me about the store-room, look up in my face smilingly, bend their finger like a hook, and say, faintly, "hook, hook." It is enough. I understand it, and love to give them a hook.

I love to watch the opening of their expanding minds. We take children of ages from five or six to ten or twelve years, because when so young they learn very quickly to speak English and to read, and acquire our ways very easily. It is easy for them to form new habits of thought and life, and there is hope, that by being taken so young into our families, and brought up under Christian instruction and example, they will become so thoroughly established in civilized and virtuous habits, that they will not turn back again to heathenism. We wish to train up many faithful teachers, to spread the Gospel through all this dark benighted land.

LETTER VII.

THE CONTRAST, AND THE PLEASING CHANGE.

Now, dear children, just imagine yourselves suddenly and imperceptibly taken from your own peaceful and happy home, and set down in the midst of heathenism. Look around you. See! The people are nearly naked, and the children quite so. Sometimes the adults have a blanket thrown over the shoulders, or wrapped about them; and sometimes they

have but a small piece tied about their person, while a few attempt to make a ludicrous display, which will make you laugh heartily. They are black, rude, unmannerly, and noisy. They run from you with fear and horror, till they become more accustomed to your white face; and then they approach tremblingly, to gaze at you, and perhaps to shake your hand.

Look there! See them prostrating themselves before their wooden, clay, and stone idols. See them call upon, and offer sacrifice to them! "Can it be true?" Yes, there are rice, fish, fowl, etc., on a plate, set before the idol, for it to eat! "Can they eat?" you may ask them. They will tell you, "Yes, they can eat, walk, and do many great things." They often leave the food before the idols, and when they return it is gone. They say that the idol ate it. Now, what do you think became of the food? You will not believe that the idol could eat it; but it is gone. Well, now try to find out. Hide yourself in that thick bush, and watch. There: see! the poor idolater goes again to offer sacrifice to his god. See him kneel, and hear him say some words. He places the food on a plate, and goes away. But the idol does not eat. Hark! See those hungry children creeping along, looking all about to see if any

one observes them. Look! They hasten to the idol, and eagerly eat up the rice and fish, and run off. Ah, now you can answer what becomes of the food. Or perhaps at other times, the dogs go and eat it up. Poor man! Does not your very heart pity him in his blindness?

Look again. Others are wearing numerous *charms*, or *gree-grees*, or *fetiches*, about their necks, wrists, ankles, etc., supposing that by them they will be protected from all harm—from sickness, witches, enemies, wild beasts, etc. They are governed and led captive by many and ridiculous superstitions. You are much astonished to see that any human beings could ever believe such foolish things as they do. They are grossly ignorant. They can not read. They know nothing of a Saviour, and never prayed once to their heavenly Father. They do not know that they *can* pray to the Supreme Being, though they every where have an indistinct knowledge of his existence.

Let us wait awhile, and behold more of heathenism. Night comes on. Hark! You hear the noise of drums and music. "Is war coming?" No. Do not fear. You hear the noise of *dance and song*, and shouts of boisterous mirth rending the air. Ah, now you call to mind the saying, "When the sun goes down all

Africa dances." Yes, this is it. You can not sleep. The noise continues till near midnight, and frequently all night long.

Go close and talk to them—they will not harm you. Talk to them about *death*, and *future life*. They stare, and laugh, and talk among themselves, and turn away. They can not understand you. You feel sad, and say, "Is there no hope that such a people can be saved?"

Do not be discouraged. Come with me a little while. It is Wednesday evening. Sit down here in this fine grove of plantain-trees, near a large mud-house, thatched with grass. Listen! Hark! What is it? What do you hear now? You listen again. You are surprised to hear sounds quite intelligible to you, in *English*. They sound quite familiar. Many are gathered together. The whole assembly join in a song of praise. The hymn is one you have known from infancy,—"From all that dwell below the skies." With the tune, also, you are familiar. It is Old Hundred. They sing with energy and sweetness, and seem to be truly devout.

Now the voice of prayer is heard. One, and another, and another, and another, and another, follow each other in earnest supplications and confessions to our common Father.

The feelings expressed, the language, ideas, etc., are all such as you have often heard in your native village. They seem to have the same heart as in America, and you seem to be among those who know the power of the blessed Gospel.

And now they speak. One after another tells what God has done for his soul, and they praise the Lord for his great mercies to them, in giving them missionaries, and the knowledge of a Saviour, of pardon, and eternal life. A small boy, six or seven years old, arises with much solemnity, and confesses his sins. He professes repentance, and submission to Christ, and speaks of the love of God to them while they were going on in darkness, down to eternal death. Another speaks of some besetting sin, which troubles him, and asks that they will pray for him. Another speaks of the worth of the soul, and his determination to save his own, that he "may go to heaven, where Jesus is, and where all good beings dwell, and where no bad can come." Another exhorts. Another, and another testify to the power and blessedness of the Gospel, in their own happy experience.

Others pray. They all sing again; and so on for an hour and a half, or two hours. You

are much delighted, and while you wonder at what you hear, ask, "But who are these? How different from what I saw a little while ago." Mark the answer. A few years since they were all *just such heathen* as you saw a little before; but they have received and embraced the Gospel, which has led them "from darkness to light, and turned them from the power of Satan unto God." They now have a hope of eternal life and blessedness with Jesus, and with all who love him, at his right hand.

As these now are we expect to see many more, from time to time. Those yet in darkness only need the same blessed Gospel that you enjoy, and they too may be taught to forsake the ways of heathenism, and sing the praises of God. This is the glorious work in which we are engaged. Will you help us, by your prayers, contributions, and labors? We very much need all the aid we can get. It is a very great work, and one in which we should *all* be engaged. Christ, angels, and all holy beings are interested in this work of saving lost men. And will not all my readers be actively employed therein, that thus they may truly be "workers together with God."

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

A STONE IDOL.

Here is a view of one of their stone idols. They are of different shapes and sizes. They also worship trees, snakes, alligators, ant-hills, lions and other animals, and very many other objects, where they have not the Bible. Oh, shall they not speedily have it?

THE CHARMS, GREE-GREES, ETC.

The charms, etc., spoken of before, are of two kinds.

1. Some sentences of Arabic, written by Mohammedans on pieces of paper, bark, or leather, and inclosed in cases of leather, or a bag of cloth, or a goat's horn, etc., and worn about the wrist, or ankle, or suspended to the neck, for protection.

2. At other times they get some small stones, of peculiar appearance, or some other little thing, and wrap it in a cloth, and carry it with them for the same object. Often it is only a small smooth stone, about the size of a hickory nut, which they worship, and use as a

gree-gree And as we see them thus trusting in such objects, we recall what God said in Hosea: "With the *smooth stones of the brook* is thy portion."

Nearly everybody has some kind of a charm. To get them they are willing to give any thing they can command. Oh, how they are to be pitied in their blindness! Can we not do more for them than we have done? May we show our gratitude for the blessings which we enjoy, by a becoming zeal to impart them to those who have them not.

"Freely ye have received; freely give!"

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER VIII.

INTERESTING INCIDENT—VERSES.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

Some of the children here are very kind to the missionaries, and love to do them favors. They seem to take great delight when they can have the privilege of doing something to please those who are laboring for their good.

A few days ago the following incident occurred. A boy, whose father lives about twen-

ty-four miles from the mission, went home for a few days. When he returned he brought some fish (dried) for himself; but a fine large one, which he caught here in the river, he sent up to the mission-house, with the following note to Miss Sexton:

"DEAR MADAM—I send this fish for you, that you may eat it for your health; because I know that from since you came here, you never have been well but little. I hope the Lord may strengthen you, and give you grace according to your day.

Yours, respectfully,

"J. R. A."

The children often come to us, bringing some nice fruit or flowers, which they have gathered, or fish which they have caught, as a token of their love and respect. Such little tokens are very much prized by us, as they often seem to show the feelings of those for whose welfare we toil and suffer.

Feeling, dear children, that you would be pleased to read some verses on Africa, composed by Mrs. Burton, soon after she reached Freetown, I have obtained her permission to send them to you. And here they are, on the following pages:

AFRICA, DESCRIBED FOR SABBATH-SCHOOL CHILDREN.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH BURTON.

I think of you, though I am here,
Where sunny skies are very clear,
And Nature, too, has much to cheer—
Dear children.

The Summer air is very bland,
And beauty reigns on every hand,
Proclaiming this a favored land—
Dear children.

How beautiful these mountains high,
That seem almost to reach the sky,
As in the sunlight now they lie—
Dear children.

The *Orange* and the *Palm*-tree rise,
As if to bless our weary eyes,
And tell us "God is ever wise,"—
Dear children.

'Tis God has spread these beauties round;
With verdure covered all this ground,
And made these luscious fruits abound—
Dear children.

Oh, must I turn from these away,
And tell of those who ever stray
Far from the blessed, heavenly way—
Dear children?

O'er all this land reigns moral night,
With but few rays of Gospel light,
To cheer and gladden Christian sight—
Dear children.

Here millions grope their downward way
Through clouds and darkness, to decay;
None pointing to a brighter day—
Dear children.

The Bible here has never shed
Its gentle blessings on their head,
Or told them how a Saviour bled—
Dear children.

Here Nature spreads her gifts in vain,
Where man has long in darkness lain,
With naught his passions to restrain—
Dear children.

Oh, shall they not the Gospel know,
Which saves us all from endless wo,
And to the blessed Saviour go—
Dear children?

Yes, though the promise waiteth long,
"Redeeming Love" shall be their song,
And they will join the happy throng—
Dear children.

Oh, grant us, Lord, a blessed share,
In teaching them our Father's care;
Then may we all his image bear—
Dear children.

I trust that you will all adopt the sentiment of these last two verses, and resolve to labor with all your might, to dispel the heathen darkness and superstition from this fair world, but especially from Africa. And will not some of you ask the Lord to let you come to this dark, but pleasant land, to help us in the blessed and heavenly work of leading this people to the Saviour?

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

A SKETCH.

It is true, as these verses represent, that Africa is a very pleasant land, and beautiful. The evergreen forests are beautiful. The various trees—the orange, the palm, the mango, the sour-sop, the guava, the plantain, the banana, the lemon, the bread-fruit, the plum, and many others—are *beautiful.* The multiplied and various flowers are beautiful, all the year. Our rose-bushes are in constant bloom. One or another kind of rich and fragrant flowers are ready to please and refresh us nearly every day of the year. To see our vegetables and fruits offering their lusciousness to us all the year, fresh and sweet, is beautiful. The

ever green and growing grass, which clothes our yards, and fields, and roads, is beautiful. The air is delightful, and "very bland." While we never have any snow, or ice, or frost, or chilling blasts, as in America, we yet never have it so hot in our part of Africa, by ten degrees, as it often is there in the summer time. All along the western coast of Africa, from twelve degrees north of the equator to twelve degrees south, the thermometer does not go over ninety degrees. It sometimes sinks as low as sixty in the night. Missionaries and others, who have lived in different places for many years, have published such statements as these, with reference to the various localities.

In the northern and southern portions of Africa, or in the regions of any of the sandy deserts, it is very hot. If you ask, why we do not have it any hotter, where I lived, I will give you only two reasons: 1. The days and nights are nearly equal. We have there none of the long, hot days of our summer, to heat up the earth, as in other portions. The long, cool nights help to keep the earth generally cool. 2. The country is covered with such a thick forest and bush, and jungle, and grass, almost every where, that the sun can not heat the earth as it would if this was bare. The

ground is always kept cool, and this cools the general atmosphere, so that it can not get so hot as where the country is more open. In the interior, on some of the high table-lands and mountains they have snow and ice. There are mountains near the equator which are covered with snow all the time. But I have never been to any of those portions of the country.

CAUSE OF SICKNESS.

I have often been asked, "If it is no hotter there, how is it that it is so sickly?" For let it be understood, that *all* who go to Western Africa to reside, will, sooner or later, be called to pass through an acclimation, and will be more or less sick. Some will have a severe run of bilious fever, and many will die; while others will be more lightly affected, and after a few months enjoy good health. After the first fever, we are often troubled with "fever and ague," and general debility. We also suffer indescribably from ulcers, dreadful sores, boils, etc.

The cause of all this is found in the fact, that vegetation is constantly growing and decaying, causing the rise of miasma, or poisonous vapor, which we are constantly inhaling or breathing.

This causes the biliousness, fever, sores, languor, etc.

A thorough cultivation of the country would lessen, but never wholly remove this cause of sickness. All will suffer, more or less, but with care and prudence many may live and labor for years, for the benefit of that long-neglected, despised people.

DESCRIPTION OF OUR MISSION YARD.

Undoubtedly the lovers of flowers, etc., will read with interest the following description of our mission yard, at Kaw Mendi, by Miss Hannah More, who lived there nearly six years, and set out many of the things spoken of. She wrote these lines just as she was leaving the mission, to come home for her health. This explains the feelings expressed in the last three verses.

This place to my heart is sacred and dear,
Where our White House stood by the river clear;
Majestic palm-trees wave their tufted plumes,
And roses each month exhale their perfumes.

Here stands the bread-tree, all loaded with fruit;
And guavas, for jellies so much in repute;
Plantains in clusters, so rich to behold,
Bananas, in color like finest gold.

The capsicum grows full six feet in hight,
And pepper, used freely by black and white;
The pride of China, and pride of Peru,
With cactus, and limes, and bell-flowers blue.

The castor-plant grows for Afric's race free,
For the palma christi is here a tree;
No Winter causes its foliage to fall,
Its clusters of beans are free unto all.

Here the cocoa spreads its palmate leaves,
And the mango's dense foliage moves in each breeze;
Its clusters of fruit the branches bend low,
But pawpaws and figs on the tree-trunks grow.

Here cypress-vines choice are trained with care,
With other rich flowers, and exotics rare;
And the bright amaranths their luster shed,
With hibiscus florets, purple, white, red.

Here's the pine-apple hedge, with its choice fruit,
And sour and sweet-sop, which ever may suit;
Red cherries quite rare, with acid so fine,
With plums and molasses-fruit, and the grape-vine.

Here oranges grow, and lemons so fair,
Which white hands have planted and pruned with care;
The cashew-nut too, with its velvet-like flowers,
And then periwinkles which grace eastern bowers.

Arrow-root, cocoa, and ginger grow here,
Esculent roots by the natives held dear;
And okra, for soups esteemed very nice,
When used in palaver-sauce, on fine rice.

This garden's inclosed with a hedge of green,
Where sensitive plants and tulips are seen,
And marigolds raise their bright, golden heads,
While portulaccas bloom on their humble beds.

The arbor is graced with passion-flower vines,
And granadilla fruit in its shade reclines;
The sugar-cane too, yields its succulent sweet,
While rice, and cassada, and fine yams they eat.

Here are trees, plants, and flowers, too many to name,
For the time has expired I have to remain;
Can any forbid that I drop now a tear,
As I leave to these natives my labors so dear;

And say to this place I have loved so well,
Kaw Mendi, and loved ones, farewell! farewell!
Thy scenes, though to me they are dear as an eye,
I say to you all, good-by! good-by!

The captain is waiting, and oarsmen too,
To row me far hence in the mission canoe;
So farewell, Kaw Mendi — Oh, farewell to you,
True friends, well-beloved, my parting adieu.

The foregoing lines will give those who have never been to Africa, some idea of the many beautiful and rich flowers, fruits, etc., which we can have in our African homes. Who will go and enjoy them?

LETTER IX.

AFRICANS AS MUSICIANS.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

It has long been a saying, that "the colored people are natural singers." It is none the less true of native Africans. They are great singers, after their way, and they sing much. The women, at their simple spinning-apparatus; the husbandmen, clearing off the ground, or working in their farms; the paddlers, or rowers in their canoes,—all sing with merry cheer. And when, after supper, "all Africa dances," the dancing is accompanied with boisterous singing.

All their tunes are simple, and some are very pretty. Generally the air is quite short, and is repeated many times, with a chorus. As a general thing, one leads the tune, singing a sentence by himself; then all strike in heartily with the chorus. The words are often made up for the occasion, suggested by some incident. And often all join in some well-known song.

The men who row, or paddle canoes, have tunes and words to suit a quick, energetic motion, or a slow, lazy one. To the music they suit the motion of the oar or paddle, as in beating time.

In the night-dances, they generally dance to

the sound of the drum, or other music, and keep time very closely. They have a few instruments of music. Among these are a drum, made of a hollow log, or a hollow log with a skin tied over the end; a flute, made of a reed, which makes fine music; and a rude affair, made of about ten flat sticks, each fourteen inches long, with small gourds tied beneath, having rattles attached. In using the last, a man beats upon these flat sticks, which produce *tones*, and make rather pretty music. They also have other instruments which I can not now describe.

The children of our schools learn to sing by note in a remarkably short time. And by hearing a tune sung over a few times, they will sing it correctly by themselves, carrying their different parts in a very interesting manner. It is delightful, in Freetown, to hear four hundred children sing together the many tunes which they have learned. Here, they learn any thing, however difficult, by rote, with great readiness and correctness. But I have been drilling them on the principles of music, by note; and I can say, that I am not only pleased, but greatly surprised at the remarkable readiness with which they understand and put in practice the lessons brought before them, from

time to time. To say nothing of other things, I can truly declare, that they learn the principles of music much more readily than I did, when commencing this delightful study. What it took me years to understand, they seem to take up with as much ease and readiness as though simply learning their A, B, C.

I was much interested, a short time since, in hearing the sewing-class of small girls, while at their work, cheerfully singing, among themselves, a tune and words I had never heard before. They seemed so *original*, I was persuaded that they were something entirely *African*. By inquiring, I ascertained that it was made and taught to the school, by a former native teacher of our school. The words are as follows:

I love the Missionaries,
I love the Missionaries,
I love the Missionaries,
Because they first loved us—
Because they first loved us.

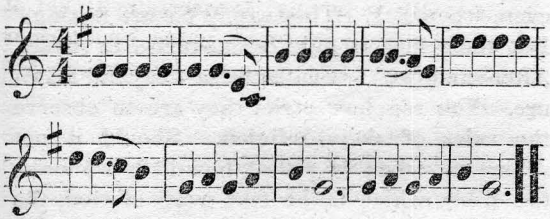
They came from their own country,
They came from their own country,
They came from their own country,
To teach us how to pray—
To teach us how to pray.

I had the little girls sing it over a number of times, until I could write the notes to the

tune, and then I sung it over to companies of them, by *note*, and asked them if it was right. They said, "Yes." They were much pleased and astonished when they saw me write the notes of their tune on the black-board, which I afterward sung, while they sang the words—to show them that both were the same.

I will send you the tune, that you may have a specimen of African tunes. You can learn it, if you like; and when you sing it, remember the African children, who "love the missionaries, because they first loved them."

KAW MENDI.



Perhaps I may some time, get some of their country tunes, which they sing at night, during their dances, or in their canoes. If I do, I will send them to you.

Forget us not. We need your prayers and labors. We will do what *we* can, and ask *you* to hold up our hands. Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER X.

MOHAMMEDANS.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

When I was in Africa before, I wrote one or two letters about Mohammedans. I will now say a few more words on the same subject. They are now all fasting through the continuance of this moon (a whole moon, within the months of July and August). They often come here, and we offer them something to eat, but they can never be persuaded to touch a mouthful, not even of *fruit*, or to drink a cup of tea, even, when sick. They say, "We are fasting." But their fast is only from sunrise to sunset. After sundown they eat and feast beyond measure. You see how strict they are to observe the rules of their religion. Should it not shame us, when we reflect how little we make the Bible, which is the true word of God, the rule of our life?

When these Mohammedans are converted to Christianity, we hope that they will be just as strict to go by the Bible, as they now are to go by the Koran. But you ask, "Is there any hope of their ever being converted to Jesus Christ?" Oh yes, children, there is much hope of this.

1. They are every where friendly to us. They seem to love to have missionaries come among the people; are willing that we should preach in their towns; and sometimes they come here to hear us preach. Some send their children to our school. From the commencement of this mission, a strong Mohammedan—an old man, and a king—has been its warmest friend, ready to help us in trouble, and always to take our part. Multitudes of them come here, from time to time, and always appear and talk as friends. Whenever, in traveling through the country, we meet Mohammedans, we meet those who give us a warm hand. 2. They are willing to talk about their religion, and about ours. 3. They have considerable knowledge of God, now, and in many things are instructed. In others, they are ignorant and superstitious. 4. They are taught in the Arabic language, so that when we place books, in that language, in their hands, they can read them. 5. And thus they can read the Bible, understandingly, in the Arabic, and are every where glad to get it, and willing to read it.

When the Bible, the pure knowledge of God and of a Saviour, is well circulated any where, with earnest prayer among Christians

for the Divine blessing, do we not expect to see happy results—to hear of souls converted, sinners reclaimed, and of whole communities reformed? Why? *Because God blesses his own word!* He has promised so to do; and when its circulation is followed with fervent prayer, he most assuredly *will* do it. "It shall not return unto him void," but prove "the power of God." With this faith we are circulating the Bible, "without note or comment,"—the simple story of Divine revelation, and of a Saviour,—among these Mohammedans, who gladly receive and promise to read it. They do read the Bible through, and through again, committing much to memory. They also copy it, read it to others, etc. And now, if these Bibles and Testaments are followed by *your* prayers, by the prayers of Christians at home, and by our united, earnest supplications, may we not reasonably expect that God will bless his own truth, to the opening of their eyes to see that Mohammed can not save them, and that "There is none other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved," but that of Jesus Christ? Is it too much to hope, while we have the unfailing promises of God to take hold of? No, no.

Mr. Brooks is circulating the Arabic Bible

in the interior, and we are trying to do so here.

Last week two intelligent Mohammedans came here to see our doctor. On Sabbath morning, I gave each of them an Arabic Testament. They read them eagerly till meeting time, then went to meeting and heard preaching. They came back and went to reading their books again, spending most of their time over them till night. As one of them was sitting on his mat in the yard, reading, I passed by him. He called me and told me in English what he had been reading about, viz: The opening of the eyes of a blind man, the raising of Lazarus, etc. This showed me that he understood what he was reading. He was astonished and much delighted at these Bible narratives. On Monday morning again, they were early at their Testaments. While thus reading, an old gray-headed Mohammedan priest came to the mission from Barmah, and one of them immediately began to read to him out of his new book, and to talk about its wonderful contents. We gave them the Testaments, which they promised to read for themselves and to others, when they should go away.

The other day one came to buy one, as they

have frequently done before. At other times they have begged for them for themselves, or to send to their friends in the interior. We mean thus to "cast the bread upon the waters," expecting to "find it" again in rich returns. Since they can read the Bible, why should they not have it as well as we? Yea, why shall not every creature who can read it have it? Has not Christ commanded it? Then let us obey and do what we can to fill the world with the true "knowledge of the Lord." God will bless his own word. Let all pray for us, and in this way help us very much.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF MOHAMMEDANS.

Mohammedans pray by beads five times a day, regularly. Would that all professing Christians were as punctual in their devotions. A little company or pressing business, or the fact of being on a journey, would not then interrupt their seasons of retirement, to commune with their Father and their Redeemer. Mohammedans read their Koran and sacred books (which are all written, not printed), very much every day, and also go by their instructions.

Oh that we who have the blessed Bible, the word of the ever-living God, might value and regard it half as much as these poor deluded creatures do the words of Mohammed, a poor, sinful man like themselves. Our indifference is deeply criminal.

Mohammedans have a historical knowledge of many persons and events of our Old Testament history. They also know the history of Jesus Christ, the circumstances of his birth, life and death, but they do not acknowledge him as their Saviour. They say that Mohammed "pleads for them before God." Ah, pitiable objects, with such a mediator, to stand between them and an offended holy God—a mediator who has sins of his own to suffer for, and who therefore can not suffer for others, inasmuch as his own guilt fully deserves all he can suffer throughout eternity.

These Mohammedans only need to be enlightened by the Spirit of God in order to see the true nature of sin, its guilt and desert, and that there is no other Saviour than Jesus Christ. Let us pray that they may be led to see and feel their need of an interest in his blood, so that they will renounce Mohammed and trust in Jesus.

They also make and trust in, and sell to the

Pagans, many charms or gree-grees, which they wear about their necks and wrists, etc., to protect them from all evil. But when they are led to feel that "none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good," then will they forever cast away all such abominations. And when they shall be truly converted to Christ, then will they make the most useful missionaries to spread the Gospel throughout a large portion of Africa, for they are scattered more or less through nearly all the northern half of the continent. They understand the various languages which are used where they dwell, and are familiar with all customs and manners of the people. They are thoroughly accustomed to the country, so that they will not be sick as we are. They have disciplined minds; are accustomed to teaching; are men of energy, and might do a great deal of good if they were only Christians. They do not drink any thing that intoxicates, and would not be tempted in this respect as the Pagans are. In many points of view they are superior, naturally, to the ignorant Pagans. Oh that all would unceasingly pray for their general conversion to Christianity.

LETTER XI.

DEATH OF GEO. C. THOMPSON.

My Dear Children:

I have told you about bringing my *children* here—one, a little boy five years and a half old, the other a babe. They enjoyed excellent health and seemed very happy for about four months. George was naturally a very active child. He could not be easy unless he was busy at something. He learned to read when quite young, and could read the Testament and other books with ease and plainness. He was very fond of reading, and read much to his mother.

He would sometimes do wrong, and has been known to go off alone and pray, and weep, confess his sins, and beg mercy from God. He talked much about his coming to Africa, "to teach the poor heathen," and took great delight in the prospect. And here he has been seen to gather a company of little children about him, and teach them good verses which he had learned from his little books.

We indulged the fond hope that he might live long and be abundantly useful in turning this people from "darkness to light," even after we were dead. We brought him to Africa

to train for this work, but God's "ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts."

On the 25th of May, 1853, he was taken sick. His father, mother and little brother were also taken down sick at the same time, so that we could not take as good care of him as we could wish. We thought of no danger till June 5th, when we saw that he must die. He died June 6th, aged five years, eleven months and twenty-two days. He was buried in the mission yard, beneath a beautiful mango tree in which he used to play, where he will rest till the Resurrection morn. It is a great affliction to us, but we repine not. We feel that Jesus has taken him to himself, and can take better care of him than we could have done. We feel that we have given him a sacrifice for the redemption of Africa, willingly, cheerfully. Jesus gave himself for us and we should cheerfully give up any thing, yes every thing for him when he calls.

The following simple lines by his father, show the feelings of George's parents respecting his death:

DEATH OF GEORGE COOK THOMPSON.

Dear son, our first-born and our joy,
How quickly art thou taken home
Few days thou dost our thoughts employ,
Ere Jesus takes thee to his throne.

We fondly hoped you long might live
To turn the heathen from their ways—
To this blest work thy parents gave
Thee, when thou first began'st thy days.

Watched o'er thee, taught thee, daily prayed,
That thou might very useful be:
And brought thee *here* to AFRIC's aid,
To teach them from their sins to flee.

Yet in the midst of childish glee,
Disease assails thee as its prey.
And ere we thought, alas! we see
Naught left us, but thy mortal clay.

Yet we'll not murmur nor repine,
The will of God is always best;
Our will to his we do resign,
And in the blest assurance rest.

With one of old, we'll ever say
(For which to spread abroad his fame.)
"*The Lord did give and take away,*
AND BLESSED BE HIS HOLY NAME."

And so like Israel's ancient king,
We're *satisfied* with God's decree;
For shortly "I shall go to him
But he shall not return to me."

Then *rest*, dear child, in Jesus' arms,
Secure from all that can molest;
Forever free from all alarms,
And with his glorious presence blest.

Thou now wilt never hunger more,
  Nor pain nor sickness there will know;
These bitter fruits on Canaan's shore
  Can find no soil in which to grow.

While here on earth thou yet did'st dwell,
  God's praises thou could'st scarcely speak;
But now thy tongue is loosed to swell
  The heavenly notes which are so sweet.

And while we toil and suffer on,
  Amid life's sore temptations, cares,
Our kind attending angel, come,
  And guard us from all fatal snares.

Sing on, loved one, thy Maker's praise,
  Louder and louder tune thy harp;
And when are passed a few more days,
  We'll join with thee no more to part.

We feel that if George is with JESUS, he is "taken from the evil to come," and that God, our Father, can make him more abundantly *useful* in the upper and more extensive field, than here below. We feel that if it was not for the *best*, on the whole, infinite *wisdom* and *love*, would not have taken him yet. Having these happy assurances, we will yet "trust in him though he slay us," and believe that he will ever "*give that which is good*," and "*never forsake us.*"

Oh what a father! What a Saviour! Do you all love and serve him? Pray for us.

Your Afflicted Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XII.

LETTER FROM WM. TUCKER.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

Having some letters from William Tucker, which I am permitted to read, I copy and send them to you, knowing that you will be pleased to hear from him again. The first is to Mr. Lewis Tappan, 48 Beekman st., New York.

MO TAPPAN MISSION, June 20th, 1853.

DEAR FATHER IN CHRIST:

I have received the book you sent, and thank you very much for this token of your love to me. Do not think that I have forgotten you, because I have not written before. I still love you as well as ever; yes, rather more than ever. I have often prayed for you that God may bless you abundantly, to live and do more good for Africa, which, though probably the first that received the light, is now the seat of heathenism where it reigns.

It requires much labor to bring Africa to the light of the true knowledge of God; but the hope of my heart is that I shall see Africa converted to God, and its inhabitants enjoying the comforts of civilized life.

Oh, if I could only see the time hastened by God, when all wars shall be put to a perpetual end, and the nations shall dwell in peace, then shall I be glad, and say to all those around, "The Lord is the living God."

The new station established here, and called after your name, Mo Tappan (Tappan Town), is a very fine place, situated on the Big Boom river, near the falls. It is high and the land productive. The soil is richer than that of Kaw Mendi. The river is large and rapid. Here lives Rev. John T. Brooks, laboring for the salvation of sinners. He is a very good missionary, and labors a great deal for the good of this people.

Pray for me. I have often prayed for you, that our hearts may be filled with the love of God, and that we may be prepared to meet him in the world of light.

Now, dear father, I will close, with many wishes for your welfare, and that of your wife and children.

Give my best compliments to all, and accept a great deal for yourself.

Your well-wisher,

WM. BROOKS TUCKER.

Again. Writing to three youths, of one family in Ohio, who are supporting him while he goes to school, he says:

DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST:

Though you are in America, and I in Africa, yet you have done much for my good; and not for mine only, but also for the good of others, who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, that from them light may spring forth. Now, my dear friends, I believe that is fulfilling the Lord's command, which saith, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

I have found God to be a very pleasant help in times of sickness, and in trouble, nearer than our most intimate friends.

I believe you have heard of the heathen worshiping the moon. The way they worship it is this. On the first appearance of the new moon, if any one has been suffering previously by sickness, nakedness, or any trouble, he or she will stand, when the moon appears, and say (striking the ground), "O moon! all the

sickness that I had last month, Oh, grant that I may get over, and never have it again," etc., repeating all the troubles they have had during the last month, and seeking deliverance therefrom.

Now, brethren, you have seen how ignorantly the poor heathen worship the moon, etc. Instead of the Creator, they worship the creature, or thing made; and will you not pray for them, that God may dwell in the hearts of the heathen?

Yours truly,

WM. B. TUCKER.

Again. Writing to a little girl, in Brooklyn, New York, who sent him a Testament, he says, very beautifully:

DEAR MADAM:

It is good to write to our friends, telling them about our hearts, and any thing that will interest them. God is the best friend we can have on earth, or hereafter. Fathers may forsake us, but he is ever faithful to those who put their trust in him.

I am very thankful to you for the book which you sent. The mission children are

improving fast, and some of them are studying arithmetic, geography, philosophy, grammar, etc. I wish you would write to them, telling them about your heart, about the Saviour, heaven, etc. I wish you to pray for them, that they may all turn to God, and that by them Africa may be brought to the knowledge of God.

Yours, truly,

WM. B. TUCKER.

Now, dear children, will you not be stirred up to pray more earnestly, and labor more zealously for the conversion of the heathen? Your self-denials, etc., are not in vain. Be encouraged, and "be faithful unto death."

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

Who can read the foregoing letters and not feel that truly the Gospel has done great things for Africa, already? And if it has done so much for Africa, in days past, with all the disadvantages under which we have labored, what may we not expect in years to come, if the proper influences are steadily applied—if "we faint not?"

LETTER XIII.

MORE LETTERS FROM AFRICAN BOYS.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

When I was in America, I read in your Sabbath-schools some letters, written by children here, and told you that if some of you would write letters to our children in Africa, they would answer them, and that thus you would hear direct from Africa. Some, in different parts of the country, wrote and have received answers. A number of our boys have been answering some of these letters lately, and while I forward them to the particular boys and girls to whom they are written, I send a copy of them to you, so that all may have the privilege of reading them, and be encouraged to labor for this interesting people. The first is from a boy who has written before. You will recognize his initials. He writes to a girl who had written to our school.

MENDI MISSION, July 2, 1853.

MY DEAR SISTER:

Your letter was given to me by Mr. Thompson, and after perusing it I thought I would write to you, and tell you a little about Africa.

It is a "pleasant land, east of the sea."* We rejoice to see Africa coming back into a state of civilization; and we expect to see missionaries going over all quarters of this dark land, according to the promise made of old.

I suppose you would like to know what causes the wars in Africa. It is the sin of envy. Not very long since, there arose war between the Sherbroes and Mandingoes. The Mandingoes are "*strangers*" in this country: that is, the country belongs to the Sherbroes, but they allow the Mandingoes to live among them. But though they thus allowed them to live in their country, they (the Mandingoes) brought war on them, and nearly two hundred Sherbroes were killed in one town, because the war came so unexpectedly.

So, dear sister, you now know how to pray for Africa. Pray, I entreat you, that she may "stretch forth her hands unto God." The Boom war lately came near us, here, and they have broken one town, by fighting against it; and nearly the whole of the inhabitants of that

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* This is the way in which the African children sing the hymn beginning—

"There is a pleasant land,
Far o'er the sea."

town were taken for slaves. So you see how wicked the Africans are.

I am studying many lessons, some of which I will mention to you: viz., grammar, Adams and Colburn's arithmetic, etc. My teacher is Mr. Tefft. I am sixteen years old

My best compliments to all your mates.

I remain your friend,

J. R. A.

Another boy, not so old as the former, writes to a boy in Michigan, who wrote before to our school here.

MENDI MISSION, July 2, 1853.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

Your letter was read to us, by Mr. Thompson. I was very glad to see your letter. When brother William Tucker wrote, I told him to put my promise in his letter, that when I knew how to write, I would send you some letters; and now I am trying, little and little, to write, etc. I am studying the Bible, Colburn's arithmetic, and grammar, and writing, etc., and by so doing I am now able to write to you.

I thank the Lord for all the goodness he hath shown me.

There is a man in Gallinas who has five

hundred wives.* His name is Prince Mannah, king of Gallinas.

I am ready to exclaim and say, "Glory to God," that we have heard the Gospel, and now when our fathers tell us to do wickedly, we are not going to do it.

Oh, dear brother, let us try to do what our teachers, and parents tell us to do. I am trying to pray for you all, and so you must pray for me.

My father is a learned man,† but now he acts like an ignorant one, because he has got so many wives; and I am very sorry that my father has done so. My mother is the first woman that he had when he left Freetown (where he went to school), and came into the

* Polygamy prevails generally in Africa, especially among the higher classes; and a man's greatness is reckoned in proportion to the number of his wives. So that a man who has five hundred wives is called "a very great gentleman." In the part where I lived, I never knew any one to have over five hundred; but in some other parts of Africa, kings have thousands of wives. The whole system of polygamy is wicked and abominable. It makes beasts and tyrants of the men, and slaves of the women; and causes more trouble than almost any other evil in Africa.

G. T.

† Having obtained a common-school education in Sierra Leone. G. T.

country; and I am the first son that my mother bore. We are, in all, three little children (of this mother).

Give my best compliments to your mother, father, teacher, brothers, sisters, etc.

Mr. Thompson is very kind to us.

Yours, truly,

C. T.

Children, what think you? Are the children here learning any? Should you not be encouraged to labor and pray for the spread of the Gospel in Africa? Oh, let us labor with our might, for soon our working time will be over, and the poor Africans are dying at the rate of ten thousand a day.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

ILL HEALTH OF MY FAMILY.

After the death of little George we all continued sick for some time. After awhile I was able to take care of Moses, and wait upon my sick wife. They were at times very sick, and suffered much. All that we could do for them did not seem to afford much relief. We therefore concluded to visit Freetown for a few

weeks, in hope that the change, the sea-breeze, etc., would restore their health. We remained in town about four weeks. At times they seemed better, and again worse. It seemed as if the little boy must die. The physician that waited on them advised us to take the mother and child to America, and said that it was the only thing that could save the child's life.

Though we left the mission expecting to return again in a few weeks, yet we felt that duty now called us to return to our native land. My dear wife was so feeble that she had to be carried to and from the canoe, and to the boat which took us to the vessel.*

We left many warm hearts at the mission, anxiously awaiting our return, and calling for us; but the Lord seemed to say, "Return to thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee;" so we engaged a passage on a vessel that sailed for New York.

We were on the ocean forty-two days. My wife was very feeble, and Moses suffered much.

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* From the mission to the town, we rode in a large canoe, on the sea, for nearly three days. We eat, slept, and lived in it, under an awning. This is the way we have to travel in Africa. They have no roads, as in America, or wagons, or teams, or canals, or railroads, or steamboats. On the water we ride in canoes; on the land we travel on foot.

We doubted whether we should get home with him, but the Lord was merciful, and spared him to us till we reached our friends, who were willing to take care of him, so that I could return to Africa, to labor for the perishing. Moses recovered, and lives.

LETTER XIV.

RETURN TO AFRICA—VERSES.

BELOVED CHILDREN:

I am again in Africa (1854), and once more sit down to address you. Since I last wrote great changes have taken place with my family. I wrote to you of the death of little George. More than two months after that, I went to America, on account of the sickness of my wife and remaining child. I saw but few of you, because I could not stay; Africa was loudly calling on me to hasten back, and I left my family with kind friends and bade them adieu, not knowing that we should ever meet again in this world. We are now far separated, not for gold or worldly honors, but for Christ's sake, and feel that we can claim his promises.

On the last day of November, 1853, I started again for this land of darkness. A good

brother consented to come with me to help us in our arduous work. There were also five other missionaries on the same vessel, going to the Gaboon Mission, on the equator.* We spent very happy days together, but we had an exceedingly rough passage across the ocean. For seventy-five hours we had a severe and terrible storm, during which the wind blew very hard and the waves rolled very high (as high as your houses), often breaking into the ship and dashing into our cabin with great fury. We knew not but that we should all sink to the bottom, but Jesus kept our minds quiet and happy. We felt that we were in the path of duty, following the leadings of his providence, and that he would give and do that for us which would be best.

In the midst of all we could sing the praises of God, and during the storm I wrote some verses suggested by the words of a little child to a sailor, when in a more terrible storm at sea. While all others were pale with fear, the child was calmly playing, and happy. His father was captain, and held the helm. A sailor astonished at the child's carelessness, asked him if he was not afraid. He answered very

* The Mendi Mission is 7½° north of the equator.

beautifully, "No, my *father* is at the helm." And he had such confidence in his father's love, wisdom and ability that he had no fear.

This boy's father, though an experienced captain, could not control the raging winds and waves. But we felt assured that we had a father whom winds and seas obeyed, and with him "in the vessel, we could smile at the storm."

We knew that he would not let the winds blow any harder or the waves rise any higher, or the storm rage any longer than would be best. We knew he loved us, and would surely "give that which is good," and therefore felt happy, whether life or death should be our portion. Thinking that you would like to read some simple verses written under such trying circumstances, I send them to you. Should you wish to sing them, you can do so to the tune "Precious Bible."

'MY FATHER'S AT THE HELM."

Though fierce the howling winds may blow,
While on the raging seas we go,
And heave our vessel to and fro—
"My Father's at the helm."

Though "lying to" with "close-reefed" sail,
While on us bursts the furious gale,
Our child-like faith shall never fail—
"My Father's at the helm."

Though mountains on huge mountains rise
And toss us upward to the skies,
While many a "sea" quite o'er us flies,
"My Father's at the helm."

Though down we plunge deep in the wave,
All threatened with a watery grave,
It cheers our hearts that *God can save*,
"My Father's at the helm."

Though from this side to that we roll,
While all things dash without control,
And terrors awe the trembling soul,
"My Father's at the helm."

Join all the gales their flapping wings,
And tear our canvas into strings,
With confidence our spirit sings,
"My Father's at the helm."

Should tempests rage from day to day,
And sweep our towering masts away,
We'll quiet sit, and smiling say,
"My Father's at the helm."

Should ocean swallow us by night,
Our father *loves and will do right*,
And in his pleasure we delight,
"My Father's at the helm."

Come storm or sunshine, life or death,
Unerring Love and Wisdom saith,
"The JUST to want no good are left,"
"My Father's at the helm."

Let wicked men and devils fear,
When viewing death and judgment near,
The child can sing without a fear,
"My Father's at the helm."

Oh blessed consolation, given
To saints while o'er life's ocean driven,
To guide their bark and bring to heaven,
"Their Father's at the helm."

Then let us tune our cheerful song,
This stormy voy'ge will not be long,
But soon we'll join the "ransomed throng,"
"*Our Father's at the helm.*"

Written December 11, 1853, during a storm at sea, and sung by the missionary company bound for Africa. Happy confidence! May every reader experience its blessedness.

Dear children, love God, and trust in him, then he will be *your* captain and guide you safe to heaven.

Your Missionary,
GEO. THOMPSON.

"SPRUNG A LEAK."

While sailing very pleasantly along one day, suddenly it was seen that the captain was greatly agitated and that there was much excitement among the crew. A large amount of

lumber was thrown overboard, and the pumps were rapidly worked for a long time. We guessed what was the matter but did not know how much danger there was till the captain told us that there was no immediate peril, and that he would get to land as soon as he could. The winds proved favorable, so that our vessel was kept in the right position to prevent its leaking badly; and thus the Lord brought us safely through; for which we sincerely praised his name.

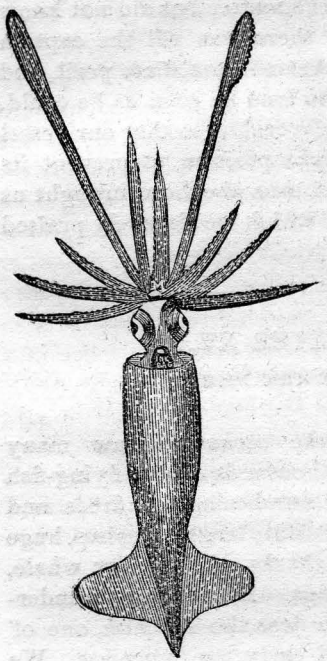
LETTER XV.

THE INK FISH.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

While crossing the ocean we saw many wonderful things—thousands of the flying-fish at times, in flocks, numbering hundreds and thousands, very beautiful; large porpoises, huge black-fish, terrible sharks, the mighty whale, and many other things. But the most wonderful creature we saw was the *Ink Fish*, one of which came aboard early one morning. We had never seen such a fish before, and I dare say most of my young readers have never seen one, and would like at least to see a picture of one, which I herewith send you. Is it not a

strange looking creature? This view represents the fish lying on its back, so as to show the ink bag, which is its great peculiarity. The one which we saw was not very large. It was only about five and a half inches long from the end of the tail to the mouth, and the longest arm was six and a half inches more, making one foot in all. But they grow very large.



The body, as shown in the cut, is within a case. The body and case down to the wings or fins, are entirely separate or disconnected. Probably the fish, like the snail, has the power of drawing itself wholly within the case. You see that it has two fins or wings. They are very fine and soft like thin, smooth

skin, and are attached to the hinder part of the body on the back. The body and wings are of a dark brownish color, finely speckled.

The fish is said to be entirely free from all bones, but I thought it had a sort of straight bone in the back from the tail to as far as the wings. It might have been only stiff gristle. The whole fish is very soft and is considered a very delicate dish in some parts of the West Indies and other places. The long feelers or arms are of a whitish color, with edges slightly speckled, and have claws on the hands, as seen in the cut. The shorter arms are more of a brownish color, speckled, and the edges somewhat rough. They are all of a kind of soft, jelly-like, glutinous, gristly substance, very pliable like strings. The longer ones seem to be used as the elephant uses his trunk, to catch food and convey it to the mouth (which you see under the roots of the two middle feelers), while the shorter ones thus outspread, seem to be designed to catch floating substances.

This fish is called a *Squid* or a *Cuttle Fish*, but the proper name is evidently *Ink Fish*, on account of the peculiar fact that it carries a bag filled with very black ink (see ink bag just below the head) on its belly, from which

it emits the dark fluid when pursued by another fish, so as to darken the waters, and thus the more easily escape. It seems to have no other means of defense. How manifold are the works of God! "sought out by all who have pleasure therein."

With the ink of this fish I wrote a number of lines, and keep them as a great curiosity. Four of the other missionaries also wrote a few lines to preserve and show to friends.

The ink is very black, and when the fish is first taken, writes well; but after a time, it becomes thick, as the body becomes dead and cold, and it is more difficult to write with it.

The eyes, as you see, are very large, and are black.

Get all the children you can to read the "Missionary" (the American Missionary, in which these letters were originally printed and published, at 48 Beekman street, New York), and to pray and labor to send the Gospel to Africa.

We are toiling on, and God is blessing our labors, of which you shall hear more hereafter. Pray for us.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XVI.

A WALK THROUGH FREETOWN.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

As you can not come to Africa, I know you will be glad to have me tell you what I see of interest; so I will try to describe some things which I saw on the evening of January 4, 1854.

Brother Condit and myself took an evening walk, in the cool of the day. Soon after we started we passed a company of people sitting on the ground, in the shade, having five or six small children with them, from two to four years old. We stopped and spoke kindly to the little ones, and they all very readily and prettily arose, and shook our hands, making a most beautiful little "*kerchy.*" They did it so nicely that we said to each other, as we passed on, "There is not in America one child in a hundred that could do that so nicely." They had evidently been early taught, and we were much delighted, thinking too how cruel and wicked it is, for people in America to despise poor Africans. *You* will not, will you, dear children? No, you will rather try to love, pray for, and do them good.

We walked on and on, through streets beautified with a great abundance of various flowers

and fruits. There were large orange-trees, heavily laden with their rich, golden fruit, limes, plantains, bananas, pawpaws, sour-sops, sweet-sops, bread-fruit trees, mango-trees, etc. There were bubbling springs, and warbling, cooling brooks; flourishing gardens (in your mid-winter, recollect), crowded huts, and swarms of respectful, well-behaved natives; with many other things. The scene was truly enchanting, and would have done any one good — the people all seemed so comfortable and happy.

Passing along a narrow street, thickly settled, we came to a house full of people, talking among themselves. They called out to us, "Good evening, sirs. Come in here;" and we went in. They arose, and gave us seats. Brother Condit, finding them all ready to hear of Jesus, preached a short sermon to them. They were all attention, and often assented, saying, "That's true;" "True;" "Yes," etc. They thanked us very much for calling, and when we had sung and prayed, we departed after all had shaken our hands, thanked us again and again, and bid us "Good night."

Brother Condit said, "That is worth crossing the ocean for." We could but think how few assemblies of neighbors, in America, gathered

for an evening chat, would have given strangers such a welcome, and such a hearing, and have seemed so pleased to hear of Jesus and his salvation. Oh, believe me, children, the Africans are an exceedingly interesting people to labor among. They love to receive instruction; and shall they not have it?

As we passed along a new and crowded street, we came to a part of the town where the Mohammedans live, in great numbers. As it was about sunset, the hour for their evening devotions, we saw them go through their ceremonies, and groaned within ourselves to see so many precious souls blinded by Satan, and trusting in their outward forms to save them. They are great pharisees.

THEIR PLACE OF WORSHIP.

For a meeting-house they had a large yard, surrounded by a stake-fence of small sticks, with mats hung up on the inside of that part of the yard where they prostrated themselves, to hide them, in some measure, from the gaze of passers-by. But by stepping around in a lane, partly behind, we could see all. The yard was very clean—all open above.

THEIR WORSHIP.

There were between fifty and one hundred

worshipers (?) assembled; all black, and mostly of the Mandingo, Joloff, and Soosoo tribes. All left their sandals at the outside of the gate. (See Ex. iii., 5; Josh. v., 15). Then each one had a sheep or goat-skin, which they spread out and knelt upon. The priest was dressed very gorgeously, and had a white turban on his head. The others had on their usual flowing-sleeve robes. We could not understand what they said, but stood and gazed with sorrow, as they knelt down, all at once, and bowed forward, putting their lips to the earth; and then all arose and stood upright, repeating their prayers aloud, and in concert all the time; then sunk down again, with their faces to the ground. Thus they continued, for nearly an hour, sitting, rising, prostrating themselves; sometimes speaking loudly, and sometimes in a low tone. All bowed and worshiped with their faces toward the *east* (which is a law of Mohammedanism every where), and all seemed earnest and devout. But *sincerity*, alone, can not save a man. He may be very sincere in believing a deadly error. The poor heathen mother who casts her babe to the crocodile, is *very* sincere. The man who swings on iron hooks, struck deep in his flesh, or casts himself before the great Juggernaut, to be crushed to

death, is very devout and sincere. But such things can not save them from sin, or from hell. So long, therefore, as these poor Mohammedans reject Christ (a knowledge of whom they have), and trust in Mohammed (a sinful man like themselves), in charms, and many pharisaical forms, how can they be saved, however sincere they may be?

If a man really thinks he is going home, while he is constantly going directly *from* home, will his sincerity be likely to bring him home? "Ah, no," you all say. Well, neither can these deluded Mohammedans be saved, while trusting in their multiplied forms, and prayers, and fasts, while they call not on the "only name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved!"

Oh, can you not pity, and pray for them? Their souls are precious.

We returned through a very crowded street, thronged by teeming hundreds at every step, as it is every night and morning. We were so pleased with our walk, that I felt I must give you an account of it. Pray for this people, and for us.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

VISIT THE SABBATH-SCHOOLS.

On the Sabbath six of our company visited Zion Sabbath-school, which contains about three hundred, or more, and heard them recite, and talked to them a good deal, much to their interest. Five of our number had never met a Sabbath-school in Africa before. They were exceedingly interested, and as we left the place said, "Well, this is worth coming to Africa for." And who would not love to see three hundred, or four hundred interesting children, in a heathen land, learning of Jesus, and the way of salvation through him?

It is cheering to know, that there are now over five hundred such collections of children, more or less, in Africa, who are taught to cast away all their idols, charms, and heathen superstitions, and who are reading the same Bible that we read; learning about the same heaven that we hope for; and many of them praying to the same Saviour whom we worship, and finding their happiness in serving him. Encouraging thought! "What hath God wrought!"

But let us not forget, that there are yet many millions of dear children in Africa, who never

yet heard of the name of Jesus. Let us labor and pray on, and faint not, till all shall know him.

LETTER XVII.

ARRIVAL AT THE MISSION—LETTER FROM W. B. T.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

I arrived here on January 14, 1854, in the night. The people had gone to bed. But they heard the canoemen singing loudly and joyfully, "Proomoie (white man) Thompson has come, and is with us in the canoe; oh, ho, ho, oh-ho-o-o!" At once they all arose and came to the wharf. And when they were assured, as we drew near, that I was indeed in the canoe, they shouted aloud, and made the air ring again. They rushed into the water, around the canoe, to get hold of my hand, each eager to be the first to greet me. Many eager hands were outstretched; some clasped me with both hands, while others embraced me in their arms, and almost carried me along. Old and young kept running to get hold of my hand, till my heart was very much affected. I was glad to see that they loved me, and were so rejoiced to see me come again, so soon. (I

had been absent over six months from the mission.) It encouraged me to hope that I might yet do them much good, and lead many more of them to Jesus. I never had such a reception before. Old people, from seventy to one hundred years old, who had not walked for months, wept and sobbed like children, for joy. I say heartily, "Give God the glory. I am unworthy. 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but unto thy name be praise.'"

LETTER FROM WM. B. TUCKER.

When I was in Peoria, Illinois, an impenitent colored man gave me a Bible for William, with a very pretty note in it, expressing the hope that it might do him much good. William wrote to him, thanking him, as follows:

MENDI MISSION, January, 1854.

DEAR FRIEND:

I received the Bible which you sent for me, and I am very thankful to you for your kindness, dear A——. May I carefully read this Bible, and may it be a "light to my path, and a lamp to my feet." May it be a consolation to me in adversity, and preserve me from temptation, and from evil.

Dear brother, have you felt the Saviour's

love shed abroad in your heart? And can you say that you have your sins forgiven—that you are a friend of Christ, and have that comfort which is promised to us by our Saviour? I love you very much as a brother (in the flesh), and I wish you would love that dear Saviour who has suffered so much for us poor sinners, and at last died for us, that we might be saved. He is the best friend that we can have on earth. He is our friend when we are well,—our friend when we are in trouble, in temptation, in sickness,—and the best comforter on our dying bed. Oh! see what a friend he is!

The children here (many of them), are trying to love that same Saviour. They have given their hearts to him, and have felt their sins forgiven. And we hope and pray that God may pour down his blessing here, so that many more may return to God, and perhaps all.

Now, dear brother, you see what the Lord is doing; and he still can do more. I have heard something about you, in relation to your not becoming a Christian yet. I wish you *would* give your heart to God, and not let these African children, who once bowed to unknown gods, get the crown, the heavenly crown, while you remain without one. If you want one, this is the time for you to get it, if you would

only labor for it, and give your every thing to him, run the race, and never stop. I pray for you. I write no more at present, for it is getting late. More some time.

Your well-wisher and friend,

WM. B. TUCKER.

That you may understand this letter more fully, here is the note, sent to William in the Bible:

"Presented by ———, of Peoria, Illinois, to William Tucker. Read this book carefully. It will be a light to your feet, and a lamp to your path. It will be a consolation to you in adversity, and preserve you from temptation in prosperity."

I hope that many of my dear readers, who do not yet love the Saviour, will apply William's letter to themselves, and take the advice and exhortation which he gives. It will be good for you. Yes, dear children, though the exhortation comes to you from one, who a few years ago "bowed to gods unknown," who has lately been brought "out of darkness into the light of the Gospel," despise it not, I entreat you. Are there not many who read this letter, who are yet in sin, unpardoned, unreconciled to God? Dear reader, how is it with you?

Do *you* love to pray to, and live for this Saviour, who suffered so much, and finally died, that you might live? Do you? Read William's letter over again, carefully. Hear him. "I wish you would give your heart to God." Read it over and over, and give your heart to God, lest the heathen "take the crown, and you be without one!" Oh, shall it be thus with any dear child, or any other, who reads this? Hear William. "This is the time for you to get the crown." But William knows, from his own experience as well as from the Bible, that if you would be saved you must "labor for it"—to resist temptation, to overcome evil habits and form new and right ones, to do good to all. And, as he says, you must "give up your every thing to Him." The Saviour, himself, says, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, can not be my disciple." And you must "run the race" that is set before you, by living to do good, and "never stop," if you would gain the crown. "Never stop!" Yes, that is it. "If any man turn back my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "Faithful unto death, and we get the crown of life"—"the heavenly crown!"

Dear reader, let not the heathen rise up in

the judgment to condemn you. Give your heart to the Saviour; love and serve him here continually, and you shall have "the crown, the heavenly crown."

Pray for us, and help us.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XVIII.

CRYING FOR THE DEAD.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

I have just returned (February 2, 1854), from a scene which made my heart bleed; and that you may feel more deeply for this poor, benighted people, I will give you an account of it.

This morning news came here that two men were drowned—one, a young man who had been working for the mission, and the other, an old man, residing at a village near here. They were drowned in Pawpaw river, about four or five miles from here, at a place where I have frequently been. The natives have a superstitious dread of the place, and call it "a *devil* place," because the bank keeps caving in there. But there is no need to assign it to the

Devil's influence, for natural causes operate there to produce such results. It is at a bend in the river, so that the water keeps cutting under the high bank, and thus it keeps falling in. In passing the place in a canoe natives are often afraid, and if any accident happens—if, for instance, the canoe rolls, or the water is rough—they think that the Devil causes it. When thus frightened, they would be much more liable to lose their balance, and upset the canoe. The canoe in which these men were, turned over (perhaps they had been drinking), and though they were good swimmers, and could easily have got ashore within a few rods, they probably thought that the Devil had caught them, and so gave up to despair, and thus were drowned. Otherwise we can not see how they could have lost their lives, for all Africans are at home in the water. But they are dead, teaching us the great importance of being prepared to meet God at any time.

THE CRY.

As soon as it was known at the village that they were dead, a general country "crying for the dead" commenced. The village is nearly a fourth of a mile from the mission-house, but we could hear them very plainly. Canoes full

of people, crossing the river to the village, were also wailing and screaming aloud. I pitied them when I remembered the darkness of their minds, and saw that "they had no comforter."

I had often preached at that village, but the most of them had refused to submit to the Saviour; choosing, like other sinners, to follow their own wicked hearts. Thinking this a good opportunity to direct them to Jesus, and to press upon their minds the importance of being prepared for sudden death, I spoke to my interpreter and walked to the scene of distress.

We arrived, but such was the noise, and excitement, and agitation of mind, that they could not hear at that time. So I preached to individuals, as I found them separated from the crowd, and pointed them to Jesus, begging them to prepare in health to meet their judge. I told them they could now see the truth of what I had so often preached to them. They assented, saying, "Yes, you spoke true word!" At a future time, I shall try, if God will, to talk to them more fully about it.

THE SCENE.

Oh! what a heart-rending scene! On approaching the town, a stranger might think

some one was being murdered, such were the awful screams that filled the air. It was truly startling; and I confess that it affected me with a feeling of horror, though I have so often heard the same, in different places. Yet, after all, a death-scene in Africa is shocking, beyond description.

But draw near. Come. Do not run away. They will not hurt you. They will take it kindly to see you present in their distress. Look in one house. There are many (all women), sitting flat on the ground, with only a small cloth about their loins. Others, wholly nude, are lying and rolling on the ground, writhing, screaming, groaning, swinging their hands, throwing their heads violently about, casting dust into the air, till their bodies are covered with dirt and tears. Others are seen walking about, wailing, wringing their hands, moaning, weeping, and making doleful lamentations, which almost make one's blood grow chill in his veins. Many have small babes on their backs, or in their arms, who, of course, are unconscious of the distress of their mothers. The men were generally sitting about, more quiet, but deeply distressed. I saw much *weeping*. The eyes of many looked as if they were nearly *wept out;* and while I talked to them,

new floods would burst forth, mingled with groans. Many of the people around came in to condole with them—which is generally the case on such occasions.

Now, children, you may never *behold* such a sight, but I know you will feel and pray for this people, that they may all embrace the Saviour offered to them from time to time, and find that comfort in life and death, which he only can impart. They need a Saviour very much. They greatly need the consolations which flow from a firm, enlightened trust in God, our Redeemer. *We* will do what we can, to make them acquainted with him; but *you* can do much likewise, if you will.

Learn all you can about the miseries of the heathen, and do what you can, to send the Gospel to them. And may many of you yet come yourselves, to tell them of Jesus.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

CUTTINGS FOR THE DEAD.

Often, in scenes like the foregoing, the poor heathen "cut themselves," as the Bible forbids. (Read Lev. xix., 28; xxi., 5; Deut. xiv., 1; Jer. xvi., 6, 7; and other places.) But the poor

heathen have no Bible, and do not know that God has spoken of and forbidden such practices; so they cut gashes on their arms, their breasts, and backs. The gashes are from one to two inches long, and from ten to two hundred in number, on one person. These often become troublesome sores, and very painful.

They also sometimes throw hot ashes over their naked bodies, in addition to the cuttings. This causes great blisters to arise, from which they suffer very much for months.

Why do they thus torment themselves? These are their "badges of mourning," their "crape," their outward sign of sorrow for the dead, their proof that they "cry!" Such things seem very strange to you, and well they may. But these benighted children of nature are very sincere, and think there is great merit in such things.

What makes the difference between them and us? Simply this. We have the Bible,—the heavenly light,—and they have not the Bible. From our childhood we have known the foolishness and wickedness of such things; and they grow up and die, generation after generation, in the firm belief that they are meritorious. Now, what can be done? Just send them the Bible, missionaries, and teachers,

and pray for the accompanying influences of the Divine Spirit, to enlighten their dark minds.

LETTER XIX.

MONTHLY CONCERT.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

On the evening of February 6th, was our *monthly concert*, to unite with the thousands of those who love Jesus, in Christendom, in praying, "Thy kingdom come." Our chapel was full. There was an unusual attendance of country people, besides the children, who were all interested. That you may have an *inside peep* at us, I will give you a brief sketch of this meeting, for your encouragement.

First, I had my large map of Africa (which many of you have seen), hung up where all could see it plainly. Then I read the seventy-second Psalm, and portions of the second and eleventh chapters of Isaiah, and made brief remarks. Next, we sang the hymn, beginning "O'er the gloomy hills of darkness," and then, after prayer, I gave a lecture from my map, showing the vastness of Africa—what is doing for it—what must be done,—and showing also

that white missionaries could not do the work, wholly; but that it must be done by Africa's own children, who had received the light that they might give it to others yet in darkness. For this purpose, I showed it was, that God gave them the light and blessings which they enjoyed; and that it was as much their duty to labor to send the news of a Saviour to the heathen, as it was that of Christians in America.

I showed them how they could all do something; the children, by devoting themselves to the work; others, by giving and praying, and by talking of Jesus to all with whom they should meet. All seemed deeply interested, and resolved to do something. An old man, named Lango, who is nearly or quite one hundred years old, led in prayer as soon as I was done speaking, with great fervency. Several others followed with much feeling. Another old man, palsied on one side, seemed as if he could not let go his hold in prayer. He wrestled, and importuned, and, I hope, prevailed. He prayed for the heathen; for Christians in America; for the missionaries; for the minister (myself); for the church here; for the children; for brother Brooks, "who has gone out among the wolves and leopards, to make the Saviour

known;"* and for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all. It was blessed to hear the old man's pleadings. Those in America, who were praying for the same object, were frequently mentioned in the prayers and remarks.

After prayer, we all joined in singing my Sabbath-school hymn,

"This is a pleasant land,
East of the sea."

The children love to sing it, in unison with the thousands who sing it thus in America:

"There is a pleasant land,
Far o'er the sea."

The children of Africa also sing it at the Gambia river, Sierra Leone, Gaboon, Liberia, etc.

After singing a number spoke very excellently. The old palsied man arose with much feeling, and talked in Mendi that all might understand. His soul was full, and he poured forth appeals in eloquence and force, that would grace any pulpit or stage. He had never before had such a distinct view of the vast regions lying in darkness, and the greatness of the work to be done. He pointed to the map

* Brother Brooks is laboring thirty-five miles in the interior.

and pressed upon the people their obligations to love God themselves, and to be *up and doing* for others in darkness. It was very affecting to see and hear the earnestness of the old man. The school teacher (a native), and his wife (Margree), spoke most excellently, and said they wished to do all they could and to give, and that the most they could give was themselves, to go any where, or do any thing they could to spread the Gospel, and lead the heathen to Christ.

It would have done any Christian's heart good to hear them. It was "good to be there." Oh that many of the dear friends in America could have been present. They would have been quickened to labor more earnestly for the benighted of Africa. But I hope that they will believe my testimony and act accordingly.

After meeting numbers came to my room, and talked yet more. The next day the people began to bring in donations to help spread the Gospel into the "regions beyond." Oh for a mighty outpouring of the spirit upon us and all this dear people. Pray for us and help what you can.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

GIVING.

I was in the habit of regularly observing the monthly concert at the mission, on the first Monday evening of each month, and they were generally seasons of very great interest and profit. The people gave of what they had. Some gave country cloths, some rice or plantains, or bananas, or sweet potatoes or their work. One young man gave a cloth worth sixty cents, and said "I give this cloth to help spread the Gospel, and with this I give my heart to God." That was the best of all. He came out on the Lord's side and became a zealous member of the church.

The boys sometimes asked to work to help the mission, and they worked in their hours for play. The girls, many of them, made each a shirt a month, in their play hours, to help on the good work. Some men gave regularly four days' work a month, others two, others one. And in this way we raised for missions, from five to seven dollars a month, from the little handful of poor people gathered around us! Should Christians in America give as much, in proportion to their ability, there would be hundreds of dollars given where now there is one. And why should we not? Is

not our ability the Gospel rule? Does not ability to do good necessarily impose upon us the obligation? Thus are we taught in the Bible. These poor converted heathen denied themselves for the privilege of giving. Who of my dear readers have ever denied themselves that they might give more?

LETTER XX.

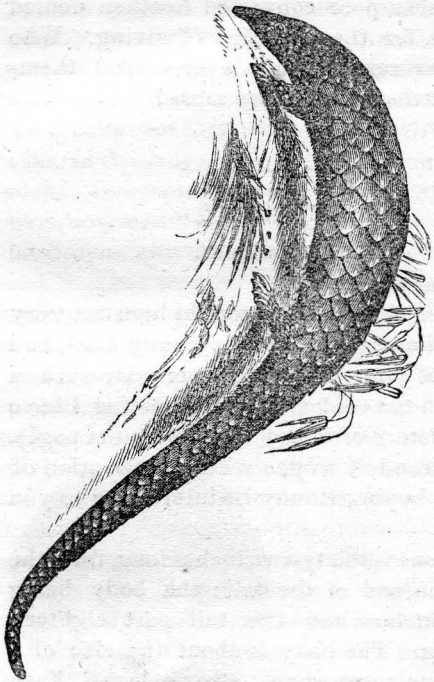
THE PHATAGIN.

My Dear Children:

The other day a native brought here two very curious animals (an old and a young one), and as none of you, probably, ever saw such a creature, in the cold climate of America, I have drawn a picture of one of them (see next page), and now send it to you with a description of the same, hoping it may be interesting to you all.

The old one is thirty-two inches long, from the nose to the end of the tail; the body being fourteen inches and the tail part eighteen inches long. The body is about the size of a cat. It has very short, strong legs. Each foot has on it four exceedingly strong claws, varying from half an inch to an inch and one-

fourth long. I never saw so strong an animal of its size. Its color is between a chesnut and yellow. Its body (except the belly, which is hairy), is all covered with large horny scales one and a half inches long and five-eighths of an inch wide, with sharp points. On the tail the scales are shorter, sharper and stiffer than the rest.



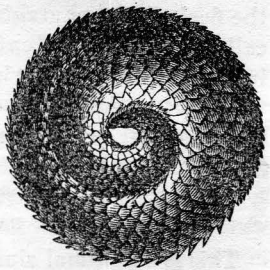
THE PHATAGIN.

They all lie over each other, like feathers, and are capable of being erected like the quills of

a porcupine, when the animal is in danger. They form its only means of defense.

The mouth is very small and has no teeth. It is a very mild, harmless and useful animal, in these warm countries. It lives on ants. These it catches in a singular manner. Its tongue which is from four to eight inches long, and covered with a slimy substance, is run out of its mouth near to a nest of the ants. They are attracted to it in numbers as they would be to sugar. When many of them have gathered upon the tongue it is suddenly drawn in and the ants are devoured.

It brings forth but one young one at a time, and this is nursed at the breast (which has two nipples), and clings to its mother wherever she goes. It climbs tall trees, and uses its strong tail much in getting from limb to limb. Its tail is broad and useful, not only as a hand, but as a shield, covering the body, when rolled up, as is seen in the cut.



This is its form when sleeping, or when attacked by an enemy. Look at it. How singular! You see it is rolled up like a ball. Yes,

it doubles its head in close, and rolls it up thus very quickly, so that the sharp scales stick out from every part, forming a complete shield, and securing it from the assaults of every animal of the forest. It has only man to dread, who has other modes of destroying it than by the use of the mouth. When it has a young one it is rolled up within and thus secured from its enemies. No dog, or leopard, or lion can bite it when thus rolled up. How wonderfully has the Lord provided for all his creatures! It is truly interesting to study his works. You understand now by the description given, how these animals are useful in this country. Like all warm countries, it swarms with ants, which trouble us very much; and these animals by consuming so many, of course relieve us to some extent. The natives every where consider the flesh of the phatagin a great luxury. They call the animal in Mendi, *Conga*, but the name in your natural histories is *Phatagin*.

Forget us not. Cease not to pray for us, and labor for Africa. Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

THE PANGOLIN.

This is an animal similar to the phatagin, but much larger, being from four to six feet long.

It has very large scales from three to five inches long, and two inches wide and one-fourth of an inch thick. It burrows large holes in the ground, and lives on ants and other insects. It also is harmless and useful. It is sought after for its flesh, which is said to be very *excellent*.

There are plenty of them in this part of Africa. I have been through portions of the country where the ground in the forest was all full of very large holes, which they had made for their homes. The natives frequently bore holes through the scales, and wear them about the neck. The Phatagin and Pangolin are both wonderful creatures. They are found in other tropical countries.

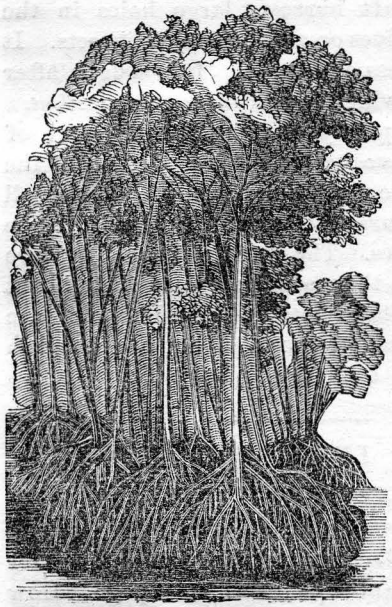
LETTER XXI.

CUTTING MANGROVES.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

I have to-day been cutting mangroves for posts. Look at the picture on next page. How do you suppose we can cut such looking trees? Well, as the people in America have but little idea as to how we in Africa are obliged to get along, I thought that a description of the way we have to work, would be interesting to you and your parents, so I will give it.

We have no roads to the woods (or bush as the Africans here call it), in which we can go with wagons, as you have. We have no teams or big wagons to go with. We could not use them in this work if we had ever so many oxen, or horses, or wagons, on account of the nature of the ground and the bush. Where mangroves grow, it is always marshy and low. You can see that it would be impossible to drive a team, over or through those roots which form such a net-work as seen in the cut.



MANGROVE TREE.

The mangrove is a very hard and durable timber, much used for building, for which pur-

pose it is very good. That you may understand what follows, look at the picture. You see how different it is from your woods. The roots are mostly above ground, as you see, running in every direction, joined to and branching from each other, till they are often so thick that even a dog can not pass between them. The body of the tree is not formed till from eight to fifteen feet from the ground. Sometimes it is twenty feet before we get above all the roots. How singular!

Well, now we start in a large canoe with six oars, eight boys and myself. After rowing about three miles we come to the place where these trees abound. In reaching the place we pass much of the thick "palm-pine bush," which is seen in the cut.

PALM-PINE BUSH.

Now here we are at the place, but how do you think we are to cut such trees? It is very difficult. We crawl along on the tops of the roots, slowly and carefully, searching for suitable trees for our work. Often my foot slips, and

down I go among the roots, and sometimes into the water, which is from one to two feet deep all about among the roots. During these pitchings, and tumblings, and catchings I try to hold fast to my ax.

Well now, here is a tree I want. Up, up, up, I climb, from root to root, till I get above them all. Then it is very difficult to get a place to stand firm upon, but I brace myself, and hold on as well as I can, and cut the tree down. Sometimes it falls toward me, and I have to jump quick, and catch from root to root to save myself. Sometimes the jar will throw me down into the water below.

The tree is down, but it still lies up high, on the roots. And when I cut a log off, my feet are suddenly thrown from beneath me, and splash I come into the water. My limbs are hurt some, my watch-crystal is broken, and I am wet, and very much heated. Sometimes we may go down feet first, and sometimes head first. We are not at liberty to choose, but must take what comes.

After a succession of similar exploits, the logs are cut. But now they are some distance from the river, and they are so heavy that they sink like a stone to the bottom. But they must be drawn through these thick roots, by

our own physical power. With axes and cutlasses we cut a narrow path through them, to the river, and then each log is with great labor lifted, pushed and drawn in the water, to the canoe, and lifted in, and thus it is at last loaded. I was thus in the mud and water, myself, for hours, working very hard, till we obtained our load. Such work "is *no play*," as the Africans say. I had been familiar with seeing mangrove bush, for years, yet till I tried it, I had but little idea of the immense difficulty of getting logs out of it. It is almost incredible; and if any one doubts my word, or if he wishes to know more fully all about it, let him come and try it for himself.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXII.

LETTER FROM AN AFRICAN BOY.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

As some of my boys have, of their own accord, written letters to the children in America, I know you will be glad to read them, and I will copy and send them to you all, through the

press. The following letter was written without any suggestion from any one, after the boy returned from a trip up the river, with Dr. Cole and brother Condit:

MENDI MISSION, February 23, 1854.

MY DEAR SABBATH-SCHOOL CHILDREN:

I take the opportunity to write you these few lines, hoping you are quite well, and all your teachers. I am very happy that the mission has come to this part of Africa, to teach us the way of God. Oh, my dear mates, this our country is a very dark land. In some parts of Africa, here, they know nothing about God, but live in their heathen ways, and worship idols! I saw a man, when we were going up to Pawpaw, who had one. As we landed at the town, I went to the blacksmith-shop, and there met an idol! I went to the house, and called Mr. Condit. He came and saw it, and went and called the man to his shop, and asked him, "What is this you have here?" He said, "That idol will help me in my work."* Mr. Condit said, "That idol will do you no good." And what do you think was his answer, when Mr. C. asked him, what it would do for him?

* How strange that any human being could think so. G. T.

He said, "When a child is born, if it can not walk, I will give it this idol to play with, and that will make the child walk!"

Mr. Condit asked him to give the idol to him, and told him he must pray to the true God who can save him. He said to us, "You must go up the river, to where you are going, and when you return back I will give you the idol." So when we were returning, we called and asked for it, but he said, "The idol has *run away!* Don't you know a spirit can walk?"

And when I see how our country people are doing, it makes me feel very sorry. When the people of Africa hear the word of God very often, and they will not believe, Oh, how awful that will be in the sight of God, when he shall say to the wicked, "Depart, ye workers of iniquity!" And when he shall say to the righteous, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" Oh, how joyful that will be!

My dear brethren, we must strive on. The work of God is sweet.

I am yours, etc.

T. C.

The writer of the above is nearly a young man. He has been here a year and a half, or

a little more; but had learned a little before he came. I hope he will do good. He is one of the few who are supported in part, or wholly by their friends; but he also works with the other boys, regularly

My next will give you other interesting letters from my boys. Pray for this people, and these children.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

The boy, whose letter we have given above, made very rapid progress. He was in the school between two and three years, and left to act as a clerk for his uncle, who was his guardian. We trust that he will exert a good influence, wherever he may live.

LETTER XXIII.

OTHER LETTERS FROM AFRICAN CHILDREN.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

In my last I promised to send you the letters of other boys, and now I fulfill my promise, assured that you will read them with much interest, and I hope with profit also.

The letters are written "To Sabbath-school Children in America," and of course, you all have a right to see them.

KAW MENDI, February 28, 1854.

DEAR FRIENDS:

I thank the Lord that I am now able to write to you. Oh, dear friends, sometimes I sit down and think of the time when I was in the country, among the heathen families; and when they trusted in their charms, and gree-grees, I would join with them to do it. Oh, when I think of that now, at this present day, I can go into the bush and pray, in view of this wickedness which I was doing. I pray for these heathen, too, and I wish to see them again, so that I may speak to them about it. I am very thankful to God for what he has done for me in this heathen land. Let, then, our hope be in God, for he knows best what is good for us, and he will give it if we ask him. Let us pray to him, trust in him, live for him, and God will make "all things work for good to us."

How good it is to be a child of God here, and then go to him when we die, and be happy forever! Oh, dear friends, who can tell this love of God to man? We ought to think of

this, and live in the "fear of the Lord, all the day long." This is all I will say to you for this time.

I am your affectionate friend,

C. T.

Another, from a smaller boy.

DEAR FRIENDS:

I want to tell you something about Africa. I came to the mission in 1848; and when I came I asked the boys, "What do you eat?" They said that they eat cabbage from the palm-tree; for at that time there was a great famine in the mission, and all the boys eat cabbage. And when the evening was come, the boys gave me the cabbage, and I eat it with a point of a stick, and the other boys laughed at me. But when the famine was over, the mission was able to get rice, and many other things.

And, after awhile, Mr. Thompson went up far in the interior, to the Mendi country, and there he met with many kings. He met with Braw, the greatest king in that country. And when he came back, he was so sick that he was obliged to go home to America, and Mr. Brooks stayed in the mission.

There are about one hundred boys and girls in the school. Some study grammar, geography, spelling, and a great many other studies. And when Sunday comes, I think that more than one hundred men and women come to meeting. We have prayer-meeting on Wednesday evening, and preaching on Thursday evening. I am only ten years of age.

F. T.

Dear children, write to these children.* Pray for us, and help

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXIV.

INTERESTING INCIDENTS—OLD SAM-A-WOO-NEE.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

One day, since my last arrival here (January 17, 1854), I took my interpreter, and went to see this old woman, probably eighty or more years of age. Mr. Raymond redeemed her, her husband, and most of the family from slavery. They had been taken prisoners by "the war," and thus were held as slaves, and would probably have been sold to the Span-

* Letters to any of our schools should be directed to the care of the missionaries, Mendi mission, and also to the care of George Whipple, 48 Beekman street, New York.

iards and taken to Brazil, or Cuba, if Mr. R. had not saved them. Four of the family are now members of my church here — father, mother, and two children.

Now, for many years this old lady has been a great sufferer, from a scrofulous affection, horrible to behold. And now, for probably more than a year, she has only been able to lie on her hard bamboo bed, and receive what was provided for her; unable to walk about, on account of the dreadfully ulcerated state of her limbs. She is a deplorable sight to look upon, but is a patient Christian.

When I went into her house she was sitting upon her bamboo bed. She had not seen me before, since I went away with my family. She stretched out both hands, and embraced me with deep emotions; and while she had her hands on my head, she sobbed, and the tears ran freely down her old, care-worn face *for joy* to see me once more in this world.

I was deeply affected, and asked her, "Is the Saviour with you?" She answered, "He is; and my heart lives only on him. From that time you went home with your wife and child, I have fasted, and prayed for you every day, continually, that God would keep you and bring you back. I was afraid you would not

come back, but God has brought you. From the time you spoke the word of God to us, the first time you came to Africa, I can't forget it. It lives in my heart. You see me here. I can't walk; but every morning, and every time before I make fire, and through the day, I can pray to God." I said, "You are old, and sick plenty, and can not stay here long. Try to be patient, and keep your mind on Jesus and heaven; and soon he will take you to himself, and there will be no more sickness nor sorrow, nor pain, with him. By all these things God wants to make us feel that this world is not our rest, or home. They are for our good." She said, "I am contented with my condition." Blessed be God! What a trophy of grace! Though suffering so long, yet "contented!" In great pain, offensive to the smell, helpless, yet "contented!" Give God the praise for the power of grace. I told her that the Saviour would soon take her home, and then she would see Mr. Raymond, who redeemed her when condemned to die, and all the other missionaries who had died for this people.*

* See the constancy of her spirit, and the uniformity in her experience, for years, in my "Thompson in Africa," page 157, under date of September 19, 1849. Her husband's name is Lango.

I have frequently called on her since, and always find her patiently waiting "till her change come;" always happy, and "contented."

Such cases make the suffering, toiling, missionary feel that he is repaid for all his privations and trials. Her husband (old Lango) is a steady, happy Christian, nearly one hundred years old, and frequently speaks of having but a little time to live, of having one foot already in the grave.

POOR MARTHA.

When I came here in 1848, there was living here a young woman whom Mr. Raymond had redeemed, and named Martha. She, too, was grievously afflicted with a scrofulous disorder about her face and neck,—which would at times eat out almost her whole cheek,—and very large spots on the neck, and in other places. She suffered exceedingly, and constantly; and as she had no friends, the mission supplied her wants from day to day. She attended meetings and class till her sores became so bad and offensive, that she felt that it was not prudent for her to throw herself among a company of well persons. Also, many did not like to go near her. She was indeed a sad-looking object, and no one could see her without groaning in pity. She professed to give her heart to Christ,

while I was here the first time, and used to talk in meeting, till she was obliged to stay away on account of her disease.

While I was at home last she died, and the following particulars were given to me by our old interpreter, who was with her in her last hours. As he visited her from time to time, he found her patient, gentle, submissive, saying, "My body is sick for true, but my soul is fixed on God." Just before her death, she sent for a chicken, and he called on her again. She still felt confidence in God, and requested him to pray with her. He called in a number, and they all prayed. Then she said, "My way is now open and clear. My work is now finished. If I die I shall go to dwell with Christ. I shall speak with God for myself. I shall go to my Father, to whom I prayed all the time." And then she died. These were her last words.

I was glad when I heard that she was dead, for I believed that she would be happy, and be delivered from much suffering. In heaven there will be no more sores. Her body will be as fair as that of any one. Oh, children, is not the Gospel "glad tidings," when it can change such loathsome objects into angels?

There are thousands of others, like Martha, in Africa. The people here suffer much in the

same way that she did. The disease is horrible to behold. Shall they not all have this "balm of Gilead," to heal their wounds, and point them to a place of rest and blessedness? Let us labor then more zealously, to send the Gospel through all this dark land.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXV.

OTHER INTERESTING INCIDENTS.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

Let me show you a beautiful sight. See this long table beneath the mission piazza, around which are gathered about seventy boys, of various ages, quietly waiting till all are ready. Then, while a larger boy, at the middle of the table, asks a blessing, all repeat it in sentences after him, saying, "Bless us, O Lord, and let our food strengthen us to serve thee, for Christ's sake. Amen."

Beforetime, when living in darkness, they would have rushed around, pulling and pushing, like a herd of pigs—each one striving to get the best, and the most. Of course the heart of the missionary is gratified at the

change now apparent, and with all evidences of improvement among those for whom he labors.

THE STOLEN BISCUIT.

One morning I found some biscuit hid in the piazza; and in a day or two, a boy found some more, and brought it to me. (There was a box of soda biscuit standing in the mission room.) I asked who took them. No one knew. I said no more; but in the morning intermission of the school three small boys came to my room, saying, "We want to confess our sin." I told them that I would hear them, and they said, "We took the biscuit, and hid them there. We did wrong. We are sorry and want you to forgive us." I talked to them of the sin of stealing, told them that I forgave them, prayed with them, and let them go. I do not think the little boys are Christians, but I was glad to see them come thus, of their own accord, and confess their sin. And you will say that it was more noble than to conceal it until found out.

TWO HEARTS.

Frequently, in my room and in the chape the children and others, speak of two heart One says, "Sometimes one heart tell me t this and that (wrong thing), but th

heart says, 'No, that will be sin. You hear the missionary preach every day, and tell us we must not do that. You done hear the truth, that Jesus die for we, and now you must leave all bad ways.' So I can't (would not) do that thing."

Another says, "Sometimes my heart can say, 'You can take this thing and eat it, and no one can see you.' But again my heart tell me, 'No, that is devil-work. God can see you. You should mind him, and keep his laws.'"

Still another. "When my companions speak bad word to me, or strike me, one heart can tell me to curse, or strike back, but the other says, 'No, that is not good. Every day you hear that we must love, and bear, and be patient. You should beg God for patient heart, and forgive him.' So I can not mind the bad they do me. I can leave it with God."

Another says, "One heart can tell me to leave prayer, and all this God work, saying, 'What good can it do you?' But the other says, 'I can't do that. God is very good to me in giving his son to die for me, and in sending his missionaries here to teach me; and he feeds us every day, and gives us many things, and I can't leave him. I will pray unto, and serve him as long as I live.'"

And many such things are said by them, from day to day, in the class, the prayer-meeting, or my room. Does not this idea of theirs in some measure illustrate Romans vii., 21—23? Ask your parents, or Sabbath-school teacher.

Some, when troubled with temptation, or with sin, say, "My heart is too strong for me." "My sin is more than me"* (that is, it overcomes me, it holds me, it keeps me under), "and I beg God to keep me." "My heart is too strong for me. I don't know what to do," and many such like expressions. They are very expressive, when rightly understood, and show the inward struggle between an enlightened judgment, or conscience, and their depraved inclinations. We all know the same, but express ourselves somewhat differently.

JOINING THE CHURCH.

On the first sabbath in January, four of our school-boys were baptized, and united with the church—all very interesting, and promising lads. Last Sabbath (first Sabbath in March), five new members were baptized and received to the church—two of whom were school-boys, who, we hope, will be useful. It was very

* Paul says, "But I am carnal, sold under sin."

interesting, as such a thing always is, to see these dear youth manifesting the evidences of piety so clearly, that we could receive them to the church. While they come out and separate themselves from their companions, and publicly join themselves to the Lord, and to his people, I think that the angels in heaven must also rejoice. And surely all Christians will rejoice with us.

After meeting, we went and gave the sacrament of the Lord's supper to old Sam-a-woonee, in her humble mud hut, as she sat on her hard bamboo bed. It was an affecting scene. Soon she will see her Saviour, face to face, and need no rite of remembrance.

Children, do you all pray for us, and for this people?

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXVI.

JOURNEY TO MO TAPPAN, AND BACK.

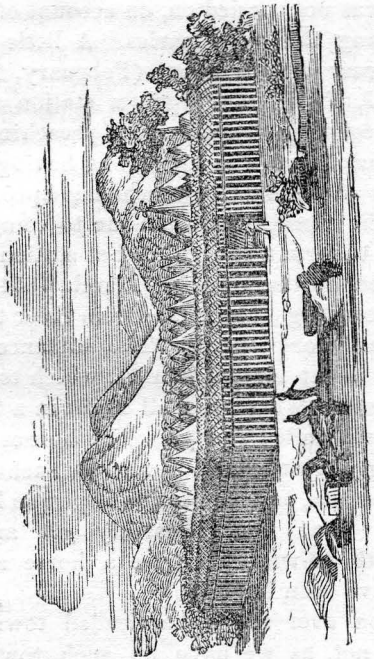
MY DEAR CHILDREN:

Four years ago I went to the falls of Big Boom river, and made an agreement for a place to begin a mission. But for a long time the

mission was not carried on, on account of sickness among the missionaries. A little more than a year ago, however (February, 1853), brother J. T. Brooks began a station there, opened a school, and commenced preaching and other services. He is alone, but having with him a few of our older boys, who have professed to love the Lord, he wished me to come and help him to form a church at that station.

I started on the third of March, 1854, in a canoe, ascending our Little Boom river to one of its heads, or sources. The distance was probably about eighteen miles, which took us seven hours. We stayed all night in a barricaded town, called Manya. The houses were exceedingly crowded. I never saw such a *jam* of little houses, or such crowds of people living together. One could scarcely get around through the town. To drive a horse about, would have been impossible.

Did you ever see a barricaded town? I presume not, as we have no such towns in America; there the people are secure in open villages. But here they build fences, called barricades, about their towns, for a defense against enemies and wild beasts. That you may get some idea of the appearance of such a town, I give you a picture of one on next page.

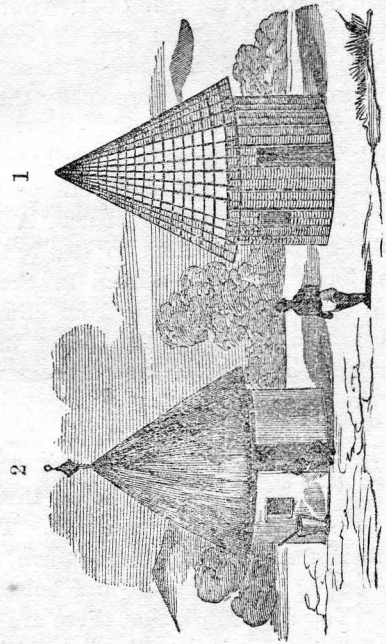


A BARRICADED TOWN.

"How strangely it looks. Do you call that a town?" Yes, my dear reader, there are thousands of such towns in Africa. Some of them are small, containing not more than one hundred people. Others contain five hundred; others one thousand. Others are very large,

and contain from fifty thousand to five hundred thousand people, and extend over the country from three to six miles. In some of these large towns you would get lost more easily than in the great city of New York.

Now look at the barricade. See how it is made. You see there are many tall posts set in the ground, a few inches apart. A horizontal pole is lashed to them to steady them, and then long brush is woven in the top very thick, to prevent any one from climbing over. About ten feet from this fence, inside, is another fence of posts, making a breastwork of one to two feet thick, and from six to eight feet high, with brush woven in on the top. Thus there is a space between the fences. Through the inner fence are holes, through which they can shoot with muskets. There are a number of small gates to the town, each one made out of a whole slab, and bolted on the inside. You may think that these are very curious defenses to a town. They would be in America; but this people are ignorant. We wish to teach them, and lead them to love one another, so that they will need no such barricades to protect them from enemies. You can see the tops of the houses over the fence. There is a view of some of their houses on next page.



NATIVE HOUSES.

Generally they are round. Some of them are square, or of other shapes. They are from twelve to twenty feet in diameter. The people set posts in the ground, and weave in small sticks, so that it looks like a great basket. (See No. 1.) Then they rub on mud with their

hands, to cover it over. They tie on rafters, and cover them with thatch of grass, or of the bamboo leaf. (See No. 2.) They live on the ground—build their fire there, sleep there, sit there, and eat there. They have but little household furniture, for they are exceedingly poor and degraded, without the Gospel.

Well, we stayed all night in one of these little mud houses, so small that we could hardly all get in, and so low that we could scarcely stand upright. The next morning we started on foot overland, to Big Boom river. We walked six miles to Mah-chung (which means "Do not pass without stopping to eat") or the eating-place, so called because it is nearly half-way between the rivers. It would be called the "Half-way House," in America. We cooked our breakfast and walked on through beautiful small prairies, groves and old farms, for nine miles, to a barricaded town on Big Boom river, called Bogo. From this place we took a canoe again, and ascended the majestic Big Boom. Oh how delightful it was! The water, so clear and sweet; the large sand-banks; the high shores; the numerous towns and villages; the towering, majestic, wide-spreading cotton trees; the thriving farms; the sporting fish; the numerous birds; with many things besides, all

combined to divert and cheer the mind of the voyager. We stayed all night again at a barricaded town, called Mo-ko-long, near which we expect to begin another station, as soon as we can have missionaries enough. The next day we arrived at Mo Tappan.

I had been gone from this place for four years, and many who had seen me and heard of my name, crowded to get hold of my hand, shouting "Feara, feara, 'Ngawaw," that is, "thank God." The next day was the Sabbath (April 2d). In the morning, after suitable conversation and prayer, a little church was formed of four members, viz: Mr. Brooks and three of the boys, who had letters from the Kaw Mendi church. At 11 o'clock I preached. In the afternoon the Lord's Supper was administered, at which time another boy united with the church on profession of his faith and baptism. It was an interesting scene, and I want you all to pray that the little vine now planted in that far off wilderness, may be richly watered with heavenly dews, and may spread far and wide, till all shall be blessed by its influence. A vast expanse of heathenish darkness surrounds these Christians. Let us pray that they may be a true and steady light.

The next Sabbath I walked one mile to Mo

Fugi, a walled town; then to Tissana, an open town, then to Mo Bungo, a large, open town, over the river; then one mile to Soombwea, a large walled town, preaching at each of these places, and then returned home against a strong current, much fatigued. Oh that Mr. Brooks had six good missionaries with him to help preach the Gospel to that hungry, interesting people. The children whom he has taken, are very interesting.

On Tuesday morning I started home, on foot. We walked three and a half miles to Lavannah, a large walled town, where we stopped for a few minutes. The king gave me a country cloth worth a "bar" (sixty cents), saying "It is not yet time to cook, so you must take this to buy your breakfast with." Was not this kind in him? Was it not remarkable for a heathen man? I love that man. He is always friendly to us. I became acquainted with him four years ago, when I went up into the country to make peace.

From there we walked about five miles over high hills, and a most beautiful, charming country, with delicious spring brooks, to Mo Fooga, a barricaded town, where we cooked, and where I preached while the rice was boiling. We then walked five and a half hours through

the woods, without seeing a house, and came to Pawpaw after dark, having been eleven and a half hours* on the road. In the morning we came a few miles in a canoe, and then walked two hours to our Little Boom river, and crossed over to the warm embrace of crowds of girls and boys, of men and women, all glad to see me again, after an absence of nearly two weeks. A *home* is sweet after all, even in Africa.

Dear children, again I say, pray for

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

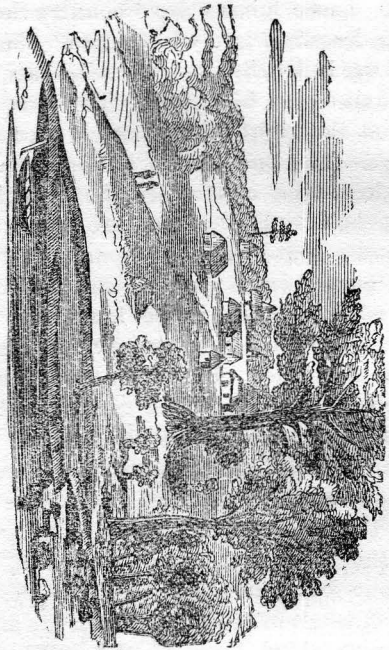
LETTER XXVII.

MO TAPPAN.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

In my last I mentioned about going to Mo Tappan for a few days. While there I got Bro. Brooks to make a picture of his place, that I might send it to you, so that you can see, as it were, one of our sweet homes in Africa, the land so much dreaded by many. Of course a picture is not so beautiful as the reality, but as most of you will never see the reality (I hope that *some* will), I know that you and your

* We have since walked this distance frequently in ten hours.



MO TAPPAN STATION.

parents will be glad to see a picture. So here you have it.

Well, how do you like it? Is it not a pretty home? If you could once be there you would all say "oh yes." Now imagine that you sit in the boat at the wharf, and let me explain things

to you. Those houses are "country houses," made as described in my last letter. The right hand house is Bro. Brooks', where he eats, sleeps, writes and keeps his goods. The first round house on the right of the path is occupied by the boys. The one on the left is where Wm. B. Tucker lives, and where the school is at present held. The others are the kitchen, cow-house, goat-house and houses of the natives. These houses are sixty feet above high-water mark, eighty above low-water mark. The first bank is about twenty feet high and the next eight feet. From this there is a gradual rise to the houses. You see the path leading up from the wharf at the left hand.

In the "rains" the first bank becomes covered with water, by the high rise of the river. Where the boat lies the water is very deep. There the river falls over a ledge of rocks. About one-fourth of a mile above, to the right, are the falls, all in plain view from the mission.

But methinks I hear you ask, "What kind of trees are those?" The foliage on the left is made up of thick, small bushes, where the ground was once cultivated, but is now thus overgrown. The small tree, just at the left of the houses is called an "umbrella tree," from its peculiar shape, which you see. It is a

beautiful tree. The first large, high tree, at the wharf, is a "cotton-tree." The large, majestic tree on the hill, to the right of the houses, is also a cotton-tree. This is a wonderful tree, a picture and description of which I will give you in my next letter. The other large tree, to the right, is a magnificent wild fig-tree, one hundred feet high, or more, and three feet in diameter. It is beautiful, and bears hundreds of bushels of figs.* "But are they like the figs that we buy?" Just the same; only they need to be dried and prepared. I eat them raw. On account of their sweetness it is difficult to get them before the ants get into them. Beneath this tree, and on the bank in that grove, is a fine shady place for meetings, or to sit and read, or talk. Probably brother Brooks will have seats arranged there for such purposes.

The king (his name is Braw) who has this place, has been calling for a mission, ever since Mr. Raymond's time, eight years ago. Four years ago I went up there (in March, 1850). I was the first white man they had ever seen. In February, 1853, brother Brooks began ope-

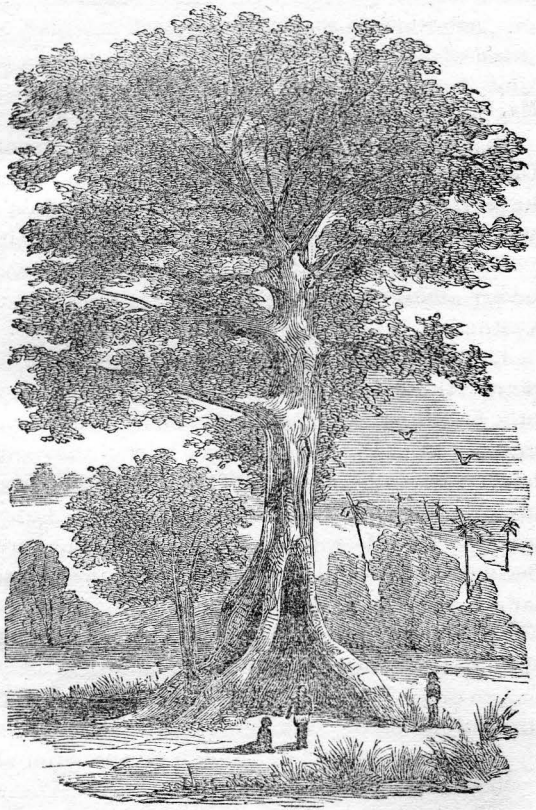
* I found very many large fig-trees, in all my travels. About Kaw Mendi small ones are plenty.

rations there. With slight exceptions (for want of help), it has gone on till it is what you see. It is a very delightful place, having fine breezes, cool nights, excellent water, and good soil. Fruits and vegetables can be raised all the year. Corn, beans, cabbages, squashes, onions, tomatoes, egg-plants, plantains, bananas, paw-paws, pine-apples, and many other such things abound greatly. No finer country need be desired.

But oh! how much we need missionaries to spread the Gospel through all this fine country. We can not go forward as we wish, for want of help. What shall we do? Will you not pray that God will send laborers? And will not some of my readers resolve, "I will go myself, as soon as I am old enough, and suitably prepared." Why not, dear youth? Do you not wish to be useful? And how else can you be so useful, as in leading the poor, benighted sons and daughters of Africa to Jesus, who died for them? It is more honorable and glorious than to accomplish the achievements of Alexander, or to sit in chair of state, or on thrones of mighty kingdoms. Who of you will be missionaries?

Your own Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.



THE COTTON-TREE.

LETTER XXVIII.

THE COTTON-TREE.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

In my last letter I promised you a picture of the majestic cotton-tree, at Mo Tappan. You have it here. It is a wonderful tree. Don't you think so? If you could walk up under it, you would involuntarily shrink back with awe, before such natural grandeur, majesty, and vastness.*

This tree is not so high, or so large round as many others in Africa are, but I never saw any other with roots so vast. These roots are unlike those of common trees—indeed they can hardly be called roots. They are more like broad, mammoth wings, or flanks, extending up for thirty feet before the body of the tree becomes round and smooth. They spread out far on every side, so that at a point six feet above the ground, they form, on one side (not seen in this view), a broad breastwork, fifty feet wide! Two feet above the ground, the breastwork is seventy feet wide! Below this the roots run along on the top of the ground from twelve to fifteen rods each way. These

* The natives worship the cotton-tree.

roots, as you see, form deep and large indentations and inclosures, which are sometimes as large as a bed-room. I traced the roots about, over four acres of surface. I am not guessing. I measured them myself. At the limit of four acres, roots were found as large as a man's arm. I know that farmers will think this a tough story, but "I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen." And I think that I was in a sane state of mind.

There it stands, and any one can measure who wishes. These vast roots form one great peculiarity of the cotton-tree, making it different from all others. They are very hard to describe, but I rejoice that I am able to send you all a picture, that you may get some idea of them.

The top of the tree is very wide-spreading, and vast. At two o'clock, in the afternoon, the shade is so extensive that five thousand persons could be seated in it. Ten thousand could stand within its limits! "It can not be possible," you say. Well, then, if you can not take my word, go and measure it for yourself, and say if I am mistaken. I think I am not, for I do not guess at it. I measured the shade and made my calculations in figures, which do not lie, when properly arranged.

The wood of the cotton-tree is very soft, and lasts but a few years when used for canoes, or for timber. This tree, unlike most of the trees in Africa, sheds its leaves every year. A few others do the same. But they remain bare only a few days, before they are again clothed in beautiful green. The most of the trees are continually green. The leaves fall one by one, and others are constantly coming out, so that the change is not noticed.

The cotton-tree takes its name from the fact that it bears large pods of silken down, much resembling fine cotton. They are plentiful all over the country, particularly along rivers. They generally stand on elevations not overflowed, and are the rallying points for towns. They rise high above all other trees, so that they are the first objects seen when nearing land, from the sea, and appear much like distant sails, for which they are often mistaken. They are our great waymarks between here and Freetown, on the sea-coast and the broad bays.

In my last letter, I spoke of a large fig-tree, at Mo Tappan. I measured the roots of that, and found them to extend over more than two acres of surface. Amid such trees and roots it would be hard plowing, but with the little hoes,

used by Africans, seed can be put in all around among the roots, and fine crops raised.

Now, children, I hope you have a more definite idea of some things in Africa, than you had before. May you labor and pray for this people.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXIX.

DRIVERS — VIPERS — SCORPIONS.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

While I was at Mo Tappan, we were attacked by the "drivers,"* and driven out of the house at night, just as we were going to bed. Do you ask, "What kind of enemies are these?" They are only ants, from one-fourth to five-eighths of an inch long; but they travel by millions in a body, and drive every thing before them.

All creatures of the forest,—the wild animals, the largest snakes, the creeping things, and all insects,—as well as all domestic beasts and fowls, dread and fly before this diminutive enemy. Only man can stand before them.

* See Vol. I. for more full explanation.

But if they come on him in the night, before he is aware, even he is often driven. Were they all to come at once, it would be comparatively easy to contend with them, by means of fire and hot water; though we should inevitably get many wounds. But as it is, if we kill tens of thousands, other myriads are constantly pouring in upon us, day and night.

On the evening of April 6th, 1854, at bedtime, we found both rooms of our house full of these noiseless enemies. They had come so stealthily that they had full possession of our castle, before we were aware of their approach. And they were pouring upon us still, in countless numbers. We sounded the alarm, and called for help from our neighbors. The boys came, and for hours we fought them with fire, and killed multitudes. (We could not stop to count the slain, as is usual in great battles, in order to report to the world.) We broke their ranks and scattered them, but they were all about, so that in every place where the foot was put down, they were seizing upon us, and trying the power of their weapons, as if in a death struggle.

A part of the time we divided our forces, with the understanding of Joab and his brother, that if the opponents of one were too strong

for him, the other should come to his assistance. While brother Brooks fought in the house, or secured himself in a hammock, I fought the legions without,—which had surrounded the house,—and made a desperate "charge" upon the "lines" of the approaching hosts. They had greatly the advantage of me, in the dark; for as I held a torch and was large, they could all easily see me, but it was very difficult for me to see them. They often caused me to "beat a retreat," in order to gain time, and gather strength; after which I would make another desperate charge upon them.

While I was thus engaged without—one against many thousands—brother Brooks, who had retired from the combat, and taken refuge in his suspended hammock, within, called out, "George, come in here, quick; here is a snake." The drivers had routed him from his place of concealment, beneath the bed, and he crawled along the whole length of brother B's bed, and among some books and papers on a stand! I came to his assistance, and we soon dispatched the venomous reptile—a grayish, very deadly viper, about thirty inches long.

Then brother Brooks told me of another large snake that had been killed in his house, a few months before, in the day-time. It was

so long, that while his head hung over the joists above (he was going aloft), his tail yet rested on the floor below. He was nine feet long! Just at this juncture, as the snake was thus going aloft, and all were afraid to attack him, a stranger (a native) came in from the country, and seeing the peril, instantly seized the serpent about the middle, with one hand, sprang through the open window as if flying, and at the same time, with a cutlass, in the other hand, drew a backhanded stroke, and soon conquered the frightful monster.

Brother Brooks said, that it was one of the most heroic acts that he ever saw. It was all done in a minute. And had it not been thus quickly done, it must have proved fatal to the noble youth, for the serpent was most venomous, its bite sure death. Its fangs were nearly an inch long, and like eagle's talons.

But to return. You may guess, that by the time the ants were overcome, I was not in much of a mood for sleeping. But after some long wakeful hours "sweet, balmy sleep" came to my relief.

But in the morning we arose to engage in another combat. This time it was with scorpions, of which we killed three. These also are very poisonous. They are somewhat like

a small lobster, in shape, and vary in length from one to ten inches. They grow much larger in some countries, and are much dreaded. It is very common to see them, sometimes in our bookcase, or in our clothes, or bed, and often among rubbish.

A word more about drivers. They bite very severely. When they seize on a person they must be killed before they will loose their hold. The larger ones are called soldiers, which guard the laborers while at their business, to keep them unmolested. They form themselves along the trail all ready for an attack on the slightest approach of danger. When they have been disturbed, and have looked for the enemy and found nothing on which to seize, they often stand almost erect, holding up their large heads, with their jaws extended to the utmost, to seize on any thing that approaches In time of an attack, the laborers join in the conflict, and all fight valiantly. Greater courage than they exhibit could not be manifested. Now do any of my readers shrink back and say, "I don't wish to live in such a country?" Well, if any wish to enjoy the luxuries of a tropical climate, they must invariably take these and many more such things along with them. If you prefer your cold winters and changeable

climate, enjoy them; but give me Africa, with all its drivers, vipers, scorpions, and their kindred. "The Lord is my keeper. The Lord is my shade upon my right hand. The Lord will preserve me from all evil." But as we are surrounded by so many enemies, you will pray for us.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

We have many other kinds of ants, some of which are very troublesome, *e. g.*, the termite or white ant. Some are very large, and some very small. Some go in families and others singly. Some infest our houses, to our great annoyance, and others are met with every where in the bushes, in the fields and along the road. Most of these ants are valuable as scavengers.

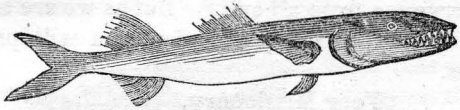
LETTER XXX.

THE BARAKOOTA—DEATH OF BRAW.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

This fish (the barakoota), abounds in all our waters about the western coast of Africa, and other places. It grows quite large, being

sometimes as much as six feet long. It is considered by all a very fine dish. It is a great troubler of fisherman, though they are glad to catch one, because they can be sold so readily.

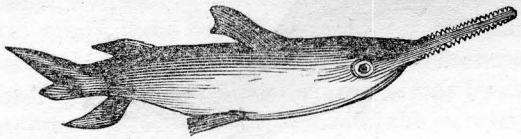


THE BARAKOOTA.

It is noted for its proficiency in cutting fish-hooks from the lines. The teeth, as you see, are numerous and sharp, and with them the fish can cut a line almost as quickly as you could with a pair of scissors. Therefore to catch them it is necessary to have a wire on the end of the line, and the hook attached to the wire. The fish from which the above cut was taken was brought to me by a fisherman on the 11th of January, 1854, when I was coming down the coast to the mission. It was a small one, measuring only thirty inches in length. You see its teeth. They are terrible, and there is danger in catching this fish, or after it is drawn up into a canoe or to the shore, that it will seize the fishermen, and fight furiously. I have heard of its seizing men by the throat and wounding them fearfully. Sometimes it bites boys when they are swimming in the water.

THE SAW-FISH.

This is another wonderful fish, inhabiting our rivers and the ocean. One was caught, a short time ago in our river, so I drew it for you. Is it not a singular fish? They grow



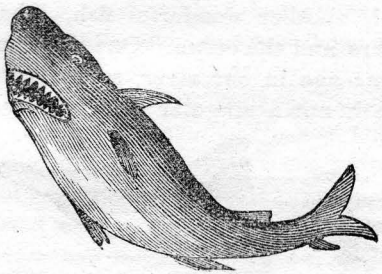
THE SAW-FISH.

from two to fifteen feet long. A long bone extends from the end of the nose, as you see, having long, sharp teeth set along in each edge, like a coarse saw. The saw is nearly one-third of the whole length of the fish, so that when we see a "saw," we can tell pretty nearly how long the fish was.

This fish darts swiftly into a school of fish, and striking the saw violently back and forth, kills many, and eats them at his leisure. A large saw-fish would be a fearful enemy to meet in the water.

Sharks also are caught in our rivers, and are said to be plenty. Did you ever see one? Many of you never did, and therefore I will here give you a picture of one which will give

some idea of the appearance of this justly dreaded and fearful fish.



THE SHARK.

They grow very large and will attack a man without provocation. They often kill people. Sometimes they bite off a leg, or otherwise wound persons who come in contact with them in the water.

DEATH OF BRAW.

Braw was formerly a Boompeh warrior; and such was his superior skill and management in war matters, that he was constituted *general-in-chief* of all the Boompeh war. The whole country was put into his hands to be protected and defended. From all accounts, in the days of his vigor he was one of the most active, energetic, driving, thundering warriors in all the country — his name spread terror among the enemy. In his management and his control

of his men, he was not equaled by any one; obstacles which would daunt and stop many, were as stubble before him.

But by his excesses and hardships, he became broken down, so that when I first became acquainted with him (in 1850), he was no longer able to lead his army to battle. Yet he still retained the control, and had generals who did his bidding. His name was spread for hundreds of miles into the interior,—he was by all confessed to be the greatest man in the country.

But greatness could not save him — he had been failing of late. When I left him this week (April 11th), he was able to walk about, and attend to palavers, but, the next evening he was dead!

"Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day, nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh." "Be ye therefore, ready."

I am suddenly called to go back to Mo Tappan. Bro. Brooks wrote the following letter and sent it by express on yesterday.

MO TAPPAN, April 12, 1854.

BROTHER THOMPSON:

Braw is dead! He died this evening at eight o'clock. All is confusion and sorrow, sorrow, sorrow. In his death, we, as a Mission, have

lost a friend, though a heathen man. Bea Bungo says that as you were the first to come to this country, you must come up at once. Fail not to come up.

J. S. B.

I go to day (April 14). What the result of this providence will be we know not; but the Lord reigns, and all shall be well. Pray for us.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXXI.

JOURNEYING—PREACHING—SMELTING FURNACE.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

My last closed with a brief account of Braw, as I was about to start for Mo Tappan after his death. On the 14th of April, I started back to that place (having just come from there on foot) in haste. We walked that afternoon ten miles, to Pawpaw, a barricaded town, owned by three or four brothers who talk English; some of whom can read also. There names are Cleveland.

There we stopped for the night. After supper, as the moon was shining delightfully, the people were collected in the open air, and I

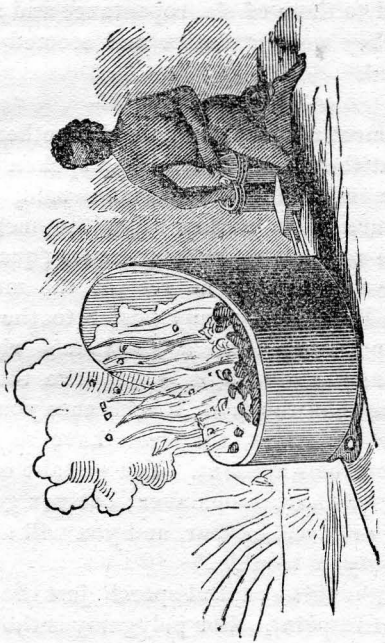
preached to them of sin, repentance and salvation. They were attentive and seemed much interested.

A SENSIBLE ANSWER.

After meeting, many remained together talking about the sermon. As I had spoken much of their wickedness, one man said, "The women are more wicked than the men, and therefore we have so many palavers (quarrels) on their account." The rest of the men assented. But a young lady (sister to the head man), spoke up like a "woman's rights" woman, and said "No, it is not true, they are not worse than the men; it is because you have so many for wives, that you have so much trouble on their account. You go take *me, one*, and you will have no palaver; but you go take we, two, or three, or four, and you will always have plenty of trouble."

I thought this a capital speech, just the truth and right in point. For polygamy is the great cause of innumerable and continual palavers (lawsuits, quarrels, disputes, wars) among this people;—and to see even one of the natives have a right view of the case, is cheering to our hearts.

The head man said to me, "I have often been told that having such a large town, it was not



THE SMELTING FURNACE.

fit that I should sit down with one wife — I ought to have ten or twelve; but I say to them, No, one is enough for me." This is encouraging.

The next day I walked twenty-five miles, to Mo Tappan, and was much wearied.

Within three and a half miles of Mo Tappan

is Lavannah. I have spoken of this place and of its king before. As I came to the town, I met him outside, where they were making iron. I had often seen the iron, but never before saw them manufacturing it. The sight is certainly a curiosity. The ore is plentiful in the surrounding hills — some of this he gave to me, and I afterward bought a piece of the iron. The furnace was in full blast, as represented, and I was gratified to see the operation.

You see that it looks something like a huge bath-tub. It is made of clay. It is about as large round as a hogshead cask, and between two and three feet deep with a high back, as you see, to keep the heat from the face of the one who blows behind.

The place you see in front is a small door daubed over tight with mud, till the ore is all melted; then it is opened and the iron runs out. The iron is of a very superior quality, much better than iron that is made in America. The natives make as much as they need for their own use in manufacturing their little hoes, axes, cutlasses, spears, bush-hooks, etc., etc.

I do not know that you can understand the bellows, but you can try. The thing before the man who is sitting down, is wood, with two bowl-like cavities, which are covered with goat

skins in such a manner, that when he lifts up one he lets in the air, and then he shuts his hand and pushes down, and that forces the air through the tube into the furnace. As he pushes down one hand he lifts up the other, and keeping up this motion, he makes a fire sufficiently hot to melt the ore. This apparatus, as you can see, is attached to the furnace by pieces of gun-barrel which go into the fire. If you can not understand it, come and see it for yourself, and then you can see the principle better than I can describe it.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXXII.

BRAW'S LAST YEARS AND DAYS.*

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

This eminent warrior died at Mo Tappan, April 12, 1854, aged about seventy years. He was a native of the far interior, and one of the most successful warriors of his time. In the early part of his life, he overran and conquered

* Chiefly furnished by Mr. Brooks.

vast territories, and many tribes; but in his old age he tried to make some amends by making peace as far as possible.*

Within the last seven years, he effected a peace with the Njahmah, Timany, Yerimah, Tahnenowhoon, North Sherbro, Jong, Kittam and Boom countries. In bringing about peace with the last-mentioned country, this famous warrior and savage statesman, fell.

The last three or four years of his life, he was mostly confined to his own town by illness; but struggled for the most part with the energy of a true patriot to extricate his tribe from war, saying, "If I can do this, I can die in peace."

Since his acquaintance with our mission, he strongly desired and encouraged us to settle at Boom Falls. During the last year we have been able to gratify this desire, and have shared his kindness and protection.

When under the influence of his ill turns during the last year, he has enjoyed the reading of the Scriptures and prayer, and has often prayed himself, confessing his sin as a warrior, and as a sinner who had worshiped things

* See my "Thompson in Africa," for an account of my labors with him, to bring about peace with the Tecongoes.

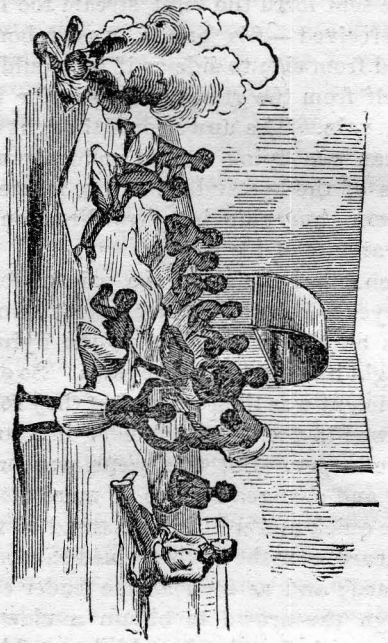
which could do him no good, begging God to forgive him. Indeed he could scarcely lie content for a day at a time, without having his son (who has learned to read and write in our school), or one of the other boys by him to read to him and talk with him. Yet, with all this which appears so favorable, we dare not express the hope that he was a Christian, because he so easily and so soon sunk back into sin, as God's hand was lightened from him.

Still his life and conduct showed him to be a changed man in many respects. His love of war and bloodshed was mostly subdued. He desired peace with all; and in some very trying instances, he set an example of forgiveness worthy to be imitated by Christians.

THE WARRIOR'S DEATH-BED SCENE.

During most of the day, Braw had lain on his mat in the center of the house, surrounded by a dozen of his wives, and a few friends, all watching anxiously every motion and expression of the dying man. Although they had not begun to think him dying, his lips had become dry, and his sufferings too intense to suffer him to speak.

All that the untutored savage mind could invent to relieve the sufferings had been tried,



THE WARRIOR'S DEATH-BED SCENE.

but all had failed. They tried their "country fashions" (sorcery), to ascertain the cause of his sufferings, accompanying their ceremonies with great threats against any one who had bewitched him. But the dying man was a dying man still—his eyes were set—the springs

of life sent forth the vital stream too feebly to be perceived — his breath was labored — he turned from side to side as if he would wrench himself from the grasp of a superior foe; but all in vain. The unwelcome thought that the old man was dying rushed suddenly upon the minds of the bystanders. In a moment, runners were hurrying in every direction, to call the warriors of his family.

Then followed a scene too painful for Christian eyes to behold. Women prostrating themselves on the ground beside the dying chief, besought him not to forsake them. So excessive and violent was their grief, that they rolled and wallowed in the dust, imploring him to remain a little longer. But this scene was broken in upon, and changed for one of more violence.

The quick and well-known tread of warriors was heard, next the undisciplined band swarmed the yard; and as soon as the leader could get through the crowd to obtain a view of the dying man's face, he drew his heavy blade, and wielding it violently, shouted a command instantly to clear the house and town of women. The poor heart-broken wives, daughters and other female relatives of Braw, were driven in every direction before drawn cutlasses, and heavy whips. For in this country of superstition, a woman may not see a head war-man or a chief close his eyes in death. But they had seen enough to satisfy them that soon their master would be no more. The account will be continued in my next.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXXIII.

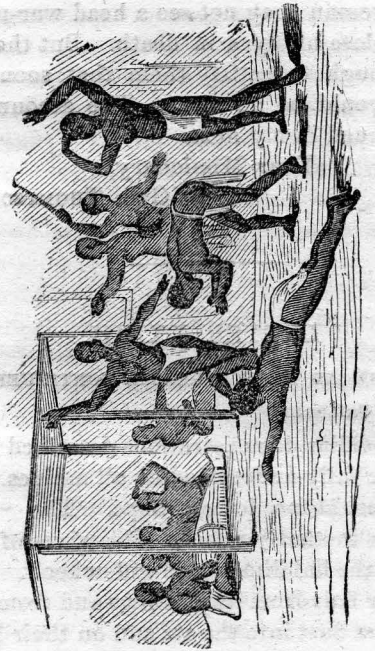
SCENE AT BRAW'S DEATH, CONTINUED.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

The peculiar demonstrations described in my last, were fully understood by all natives. The women could no longer hope. The "death cry" was instantly raised. The wives of Braw assumed the habiliments of widowhood. They tore their hair from its plaitings and from their heads, cast dust into the air and on their heads, rending the air with their cries.

THE SCENE OF WAILING.

An impressive idea may be had of this affecting scene, from the next picture, drawn on the spot by Bro. Brooks, who was an eye-witness of the whole. Such frightful manifesta-



THE SCENE OF WAILING.

tions arise from want of the hope which the Gospel alone can impart to men in affliction.

Finding it necessary to carry Braw to a secret place, in order to prevent a mixed crowd, a hammock was prepared, in which to carry him, while a few warriors were dispatched to clear

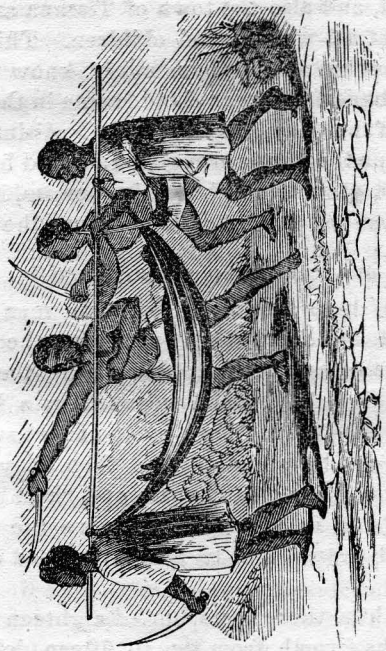
the road, and also the town of Tissana and Mo Foogi, of all women and children. This was done that no one of them might know where he was buried, lest war should come in the confusion of the "cry" and the body be disinterred and burned, out of revenge. It would be considered quite a triumph by his enemies, if they could thus get possession of and burn the body.

BRAW CARRIED TO MO FOOGI.*

Borne in a hammock by two men, and attended by about forty warriors, the body was carried one mile, to Mo Foogi, the residence of the family, and interred in a house, under a clay bed, so that no one could suspect the place to be a tomb. And then they went to Tissana, near Mo Tappan, and there threw up a mound in a house, to deceive the populace, and draw them to Tissana instead of Mo Foogi.

With him there were buried eighteen country cloths (worth from ten to fifteen dollars), twenty-fifty mats (worth from five to ten dollars), and two guns, beside cups, plates, etc. These are some of the "honors of war" with which he was buried. The articles were also

* His walled town.



BRAW CARRIED TO MO FOOGI.

intended for his use in the other world; a custom among nearly all heathen nations, till the Gospel enlightens the mind, and banishes it. Mr. Brooks says, "During the night four of Braw's wives came to Mo Tappan, howling so distressingly, that I arose and went out to see and quiet

them. As soon as I was seated on the door-step, one of them glided as if by magic from the road where she stood, I could not tell how, threw herself at my feet, and looked up in my face with such a look of despair as I shall never forget. Her countenance was so disfigured with dust and weeping, that I could not possibly tell who she was, though the moon shone full in her face. I tried to pacify her, laid my hand gently on her head, and spoke kindly to her—but that heart which looked out of woe-flashing eyes was so dark, so desolate, that it sends a chill over me to think of it. No hope, no God, no Saviour, no heaven, no thought or promise of immortality! None of these were to be seen in that dark soul.

"How soul-stirring such a sight! one has to look at it but once to make him a missionary for life. Such an appeal to me for help—such help as the Gospel alone can give—is a life-long appeal. That howl of hopelessness and despair rings in my soul yet. That distorted visage, so much like my youthful visions of a banished soul—oh that I could efface it from my memory, it has left such a torturing impression. After sitting a moment, she dragged herself along on the ground out of my sight.

"Her every expression and motion was that

of the wildest delirium; yet hopeless grief was her only disease! Had she the light of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, the knowledge of a future state, and of the resurrection, how different it would have been with her. Then she might have had some comfort in her affliction—some solace, some palliation of her grief."

And now, dear reader, shall not this people soon have the hope and comfort which you possess, and which the Gospel will give to all who hear and obey it. What will you do for them? Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

Scenes like the foregoing, and often worse, are occurring in different parts of Africa, almost continually, whenever people die, and they are dying at the rate of 10,000 a day! Oh, an angel pen can not portray the horrors of heathenism—of African darkness and superstition.

LETTER XXXIV.

CROWDS GATHERING FOR THE "CRY".

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

Braw died about eight o'clock in the evening. Before eight o'clock the next morning, friends

were there from distances of twenty, thirty, and thirty-five miles. Messengers on foot had gone that distance in the night, and early the next morning the mourning crowds were pouring in.

Of that night Mr. Brooks says: "Usually on occasions of death, at the several periods of cock-crowing in the morning, loud wailing commences, lasting from ten to thirty minutes; but this was an occasion of too bitter feeling to be circumscribed by the formalities of ordinary occasions. The wailing ceased not during the night. Not an eye was closed, either in Tissana or Mo Foogi, excepting that of the unconscious infant.

"The strong heart of the warrior, accustomed to witness scenes of blood and death, was not proof against the tide of sorrow and weeping which engulfed the accumulating throng. They too sat in the dust and wept and sobbed like children. Some passing through this place heeded not the ordinary civilities of the morning (which Africans are very particular to observe), but with a hurried step and throbbing heart, biting their lips, and unbraiding their hair, they passed, as if they would carry all their grief to the grave of the father and pride of their country.

"Some, who lived in this immediate vicinity, came to bid me good morning, and shed a tear with me, which I could not restrain, even from sympathy, had I not also felt so keenly this common affliction. It was indeed a common affliction, in which I most keenly participated. The deceased had been a friend and father to me, and for the last few months of his life he would not regale himself with a luxury which he had not first shared with his 'stranger.'"

Crowds continued to pour in from all quarters to "cry" for him. Multitudes of chiefs, and thousands of warriors and common people, old and young, male and female, from far and near, flocked together on this sad occasion, until, when I arrived on the 15th, Mr. Brooks said that there must have been three thousand people there that day. The crowd was immense. All houses were full; the bush was full; the roads were thronged; all joining in the general lamentation. There had been no such "cry" before in all this country. I think that it must have been as great as that of Joseph and the Egyptians for Jacob, when the people around said, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians." (Find and read the account; this will help you to understand it.)

But how were these multitudes to be fed? Here again the custom of the country provides. All the towns around, within from three to five miles, are expected to supply food, and they do it. The kings and head ones all bring their presents of from one-half a bar to five, ten, or twenty "bars" (a "bar" is a term of value, of sixty cents), of rice, mats, country cloths, etc., etc. This is to defray the expenses of the "cry" and to enable the successor of the deceased to pay all his debts. Companies from the towns around, came day after day, bringing from ten to thirty large bowls of cooked rice, fowls, cassada, etc., to feed the hungry multitudes.

Mr. Brooks says, "On each and every occasion of death, it is expected of all the friends to assist in the burial. When a king dies, every town will be expected to bring enough to bury him; and the town failing thus to bear its part of the expenses of such an occasion, is set down as an enemy, and will sooner or later, be called to answer to the charge of treason."

The amount brought will be in proportion to the importance of the deceased, and the greatness of the gathering. So you see that the wants of a vast crowd will in this way be provided for. A liberality is manifested on such occasions, which might shame multitudes of

even professors of religion in our own country. Oh! that we all lived according to the principles of the blessed Gospel.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXXV.

BRAW'S FUNERAL SERMON—KINDNESS REMEMBERED.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

On Sabbath morning (the 16th), all was quiet and pleasant, except the loud lamentation of the "mourning women," heard at intervals. I preached to the company of children and others at Mo Tappan, and then Bro. Brooks and myself walked to Tissana, to seek opportunity of pointing the afflicted, weeping multitudes to Jesus, who alone can comfort in sorrow and distress.

Soon the crowd assembled quietly in the bush on the river bank (in the same place where we met together four years before, and had a "blessed Sabbath." See "Thompson in Africa," page 211), to hear "God palaver." It was a large and very important assembly. The power of the country was there.—The chiefs, warriors,

and common people were present. Wm. B. Tucker was my interpreter, and I preached to them from John v: 28, 29, on the resurrection, showing them that all men must die; that this life was given to us that we may prepare for death, and meet God; that there will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust, proving it from nature and Revelation. The good I told them would have a "resurrection of life," the wicked a "resurrection of damnation." I spoke of the coming great "palaver" day, when the case of every one will be judged just right; when Christ will be the judge. He is a Saviour now, but then will be such no more. He will then pronounce the sentence, "Come" or "Depart." "Therefore," I exhorted them, "'Prepare to meet thy God.' 'Be ye therefore ready.' You all must meet him. Be ready." And so on.

They listened to these truths of the Gospel with attention and interest. Many heard for the first time. It was a solemn occasion. Oh that these dark minds may be enlightened; that they may cast away all their charms and superstitions, and embrace the Saviour. The Lord hasten the happy day. Will you not pray and labor for this blessed time?

On Monday we walked over again to the

scene of affliction, to talk with them and to inquire (after their manner, viz: with a small present), who was to be Braw's successor, to whom we might look as landlord for the mission. They received us with pleasantness and many thanks. They spoke with much emotion of my coming to their country four years before, being the first white man they ever saw; of the peace meetings then held (see my "Thompson in Africa);" of my begging both Boompeh and Tecongo to leave the war; of my going to Boompeh; and of my love to them.

It was interesting to me to see that visit remembered with so much feeling four years after. It showed me anew that my sufferings and privations among them for two months, were not in vain. "Cast thy bread upon the waters." "Blessed are they that sow beside all waters." "Thou shalt find it after many days." Blessed assurance to the toiling, suffering, lone missionary, every where.

They said further "When we saw white men walking through our country to do us good and turn us from our wickedness, it seemed as if we were one, and all sucked the same breast."

What an expression! How it should shame the proud and haughty of our country, who

despise the poor black man, and will not confess him to be a brother. Shame on them! See how much more correctly the poor, despised heathen of Africa understands men's relation to each other as one family, than those who reject the light which God has given them! See the words of Paul in Rom. ii: 14 15, beautifully fulfilled. See how, in all their ignorance, they understand the Scriptural view of man, that "God has made of one blood all nations," and that we all "have one father *."

They said again, "You opened the way into this country for other white men to come. You showed this country to Mr. Brooks and left him in your place. We now see that you are a true man. You said that you must go home, but could come back again, and now you have come, leaving family and friends, to do us good. We thank you plenty. We can hear your words." And again, when they saw me return to Mo Tappan so quickly after hearing of Braw's death, they took it as a mark of sympathy and condolence, and all seemed

* Wonder if they would acknowledge the infamous Taney as a brother? Surely he is so far below them as not to be worthy of such an honorable appellation.

very glad. It made a deep impression in our favor.

The Lord is opening our way more and more. Pray for us.

Your Missionary,

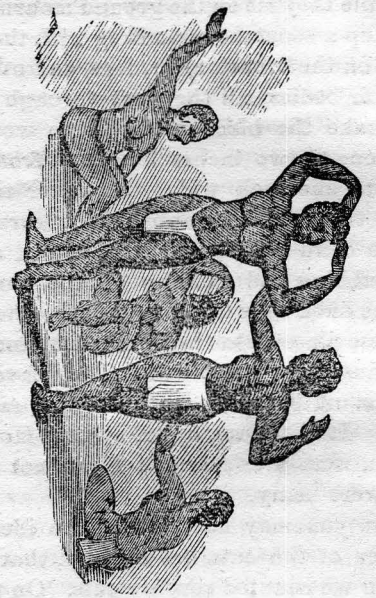
GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXXVI.

CUTTINGS IN THE FLESH FOR THE DEAD.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

In all ages, from very ancient times, it has been customary among the heathen to cut and torture themselves when their friends died, and to wear rough, coarse or torn garments on such occasions. So it is in Africa, all about us, so far as we know. That you may see that these things were common in ancient Bible times among the nations, read Jer. xvi: 6, 7; xli: 5; xlvii: 5; and xlviii: 37, and many other places in the Bible. That you may see that these things are forbidden by God, read Lev. xix: 28; xxi: 5; Deut. xiv: 1, and other places. That you may see that these same things are common here, read the following facts witnessed by Mr. Brooks and myself: While at Tissana we saw multitudes who came



CUTTINGS IN THE FLESH.

to "cry" for Braw. The men had on but little clothing, and that coarse and dirty, and had their heads shaved. The wives and "mourning women," besides wearing coarse, scanty and dirty clothing, neglecting their hair, etc., scarify and lacerate their flesh in a horrible manner.

While they sit on the ground mourning, they keep up a constant scratching with their finger nails, on the breast, arms, legs and other parts of their bodies, till they cut through the skin and make the blood run. These wounds are from one to two inches long, and from half an inch to one inch wide. At other times the same thing is accomplished by wrapping a coarse cloth tight over the finger, and with this rubbing and rubbing till the blood runs. On the back they do this for each other.

These places often become troublesome sores, and cause very great pain. They have to keep a constant brushing to keep the eager flies away. It is indeed a sad sight. How many women were thus scarified I can not tell, but they were many.

That you may have a definite idea of the number of the cuts, let me say, that on one woman we counted seventy cuts. On the back alone, of another, we counted sixty! And on the arms of another, about fifty! And they were in proportion on other parts of the body; so that they will vary from five to two hundred on one individual!

I talked with numbers of them, and asked why they did so. They said, "If we do not do

so, people will not know we cry."* It is also done as an unquestionable proof that they had no hand in causing the death of the person, but are truly sorry. Though the suffering caused by these scratches must be immense, it must be inflicted to save appearances,—to be in the fashion! For a woman in this country is not considered as "putting on mourning," without these flesh marks! "These are their crape," says Mr. Brooks, rightly. Truly the unconverted heart of man is the same every where, in Christian or in heathen lands.

At He-ge-mah also, Mr. Brooks saw them crying for a dead person, and scratching themselves in this way till sores were formed. At a place to which he went in the interior, a chief died. He saw many running, throwing dust in the air, screaming, pulling out their hair, like wild, crazy people, scratching, etc. In Soombwea a woman died, and he saw the women cutting and scratching themselves as described above. When old Sycummah died (while I was at home first), his daughter was not satisfied with the common cuttings and scratchings, but threw hot ashes over her bare

* I wonder if crape and black dresses, are not worn for the same object, by mourners in civilized countries?

flesh, burning it to blisters, and forming large ulcers or running sores, as large as the palm of the hand, which continued for months. Mr. Brooks saw her more than two months afterward, and they were not yet healed.* Pitiable objects! Who will not pity them?

Now, dear children, I have only given you a glance at the miseries of the heathen. Miseries far more numerous and dreadful, every where abound among them. Some of them I shall mention hereafter.

Now you can all tell the reason why they thus torture themselves. And you know the remedy. But a remedy must be *applied* to do any good. What will you do to apply the Gospel to all these ills, that they may soon be removed from our Father's family?

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXXVII.

MOURNING WOMEN—WAILING FOR THE DEAD.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

"Therefore I will wail and howl. I will go stripped and naked. I will make a wailing

* This was the same woman who was sent to me from the enemy as an ambassadress. (See my book, pp. 127—141.)

like the dragons, and mourning as the owls." So said Micah (see i: 8), showing that it was understood in his day. "Mourning for the dead," with weeping, and wailing, and noise, and tumult, has been common also in all ages. See instances in the Bible, from Gen. xxvii: 41; l: 3, 10, 11; Deut. xxxiv: 8; II. Samuel xviii: 33; xix: 1--4; Jeremiah ix: 17, 18; Matt. ix: 23; Mark v: 28. Read the passages in the Old Testament, and see the similarity to those which I am now to describe here. Imagine fifty or one hundred women sitting under a shed, around the dead body or a grave. Their bodies are disfigured with dirt, a few filthy rags cling about them, their hair is disheveled, while hopeless grief broods on their countenances. Some are sitting on the ground, some lying down, some rolling, and tossing violently to and fro. Their eyes are red and swollen from long weeping. They are scarcely able to speak for hoarseness. Their backs, breasts, arms, faces, and legs, are covered more or less with the horrible "cuttings" described in my last. Look at them. Draw near and hear what they say. Do not be afraid; they will not hurt you, though they are such frightful looking objects. Come close, sit down, take your pencil and write. "Oh, dear! Braw has died. Braw was

our father," (often used by them in the sense of protector). "He gave us rice to eat, but now Braw is dead and there is no one to help us. Braw was a strong man to protect and help us; but now Braw is dead, who will help us when palaver catch us?" (When trouble comes upon us.) "Oh, Braw! our father, come back to us. Braw is dead, he can't come back to us." "I shall kill myself. My father is dead. I can not bear to see so many people. I will go where my father is." (This last was wailed in English, by a son of Braw who had been to school some. The rest is Mendi. I give the interpretation.) "Oh, Braw! our father, why, when we call you, can't you come? Why will you leave us? Oh, our father! Oh, our father! Oh, our father! Oh! Oh! Oh!" Some repeat one thing, and some another, while others are just crying and scratching themselves. The whole an indescribable mass of confusion, almost deafening, and so horrible that one's blood almost chills in his veins while he beholds the dreadful scene. The reddened eyes which seem to be well nigh wept out; the hideous appearance of the crowd; the multitudinous, discordant wailings, make it truly a distressing, heart-rending sight.

Hear Mr. Brooks in varied language describe

the scenes which he witnessed day after day, before and after I left him. "Many were covered with dust but denied themselves the luxury of a bath. As they had lost their father and protector, they were prepared for a time to dismiss every pleasant thing. To be more particular. See a wife of the deceased just entering the circle of mourners for the first time. Look at her. She has unplaited her hair on the way. She has laid aside her garments and is clothed in the style of widows (with a small cloth about the loins and hips). As she draws near, she quickens her steps and bursts out into a fit of loud weeping. As soon as she is in sight of the dead or the grave, she cries out 'Oh my father! Oh my father! my father!' She can say but little more for her heart is full. She falls before the grave or the body, and repeats the words at intervals, 'Oh my father! my father!' As the first passion of grief is past she begins to recount the good which she has received at the hands of the deceased somewhat as follows: 'Oh father! when I was young you loved me and removed me from my father's house, so that my father and my mother knew me no more. What can I do without thee, oh my father! For years I have been

supplied from thy hand. When hungry, you gave me food. From thee I received my clothes and every other good. What shall I do, oh my father, my father? By thy strong arm I have been shielded from my enemies. None could insult or trouble me. But now thou art gone, thou art gone. Let me die with thee, oh my father! Let me die! Let me die! I no longer wish to live. Life without thee, oh my father, will be a scene of sorrow and trouble. Let me die! Let me die with thee, oh my father!'

"Imagine at the close of every sentence a burst of weeping, and often in the middle of a sentence, and you have only a feeble idea of the 'cry' of a single individual for a few hours. Now increase the number to scores. Then lengthen the hours to days and nights. This will give you a better notion of Braw's 'cry,' among his wives. And besides all this was the noise and the confusion of the gathering, crowding multitudes from thirty miles around."

But to be fully realized it must be seen. Language can not convey it. Now, dear readers, you have another glance at the sorrows of the heathen. While you wake and while you sleep they cease not. What will you do for them?

What you do must be done quickly, for in all their darkness and degradation, they are passing away.

Pray, labor, give and come yourselves.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXXVIII.

GOOD PROMISES—COUNTRY SWEARING.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

When Mr. Brooks and myself asked the collected chiefs who was to be our landlord, or Braw's successor, an old man, Braw's uncle, Mah-nyah-moo, answered thus in the name of all: "Yes, Braw is dead, but *I* left" (striking his hand on his breast). "If you have any palaver or trouble come to Mah-nyah-moo; nobody shall trouble you. If God takes away the missionary by death, we can't help; we will submit; but if any body comes to trouble the missionary, I will bring war on him, one time (that is, at once)."

Time and again assurances were given in the strongest possible terms, that "they would hold the mission and the missionary well *with both hands*," that they would treat him the same

as Braw did, and still would if he were alive; that we need have no fears that any one would make us any trouble; that Mah-nyah-moo would move near to the mission and see that no one molested it in any way. They regarded the existence of the mission among them as a great blessing; wished to have their children taught; felt proud to have a white man among them, and would protect him from all harm.

APPOINTING A SUCCESSOR.

As soon as a person of distinction is dead, whether a chief or great warrior, a successor is at once appointed, either by the relatives or the country. In case of delay in the matter, the strongest (most influential) man in the family of the deceased steps forward and becomes protector of the family, till a regular successor is appointed, who will generally be the strongest man among them. In this case Mah-nyah-moo being the oldest and most powerful member of the family, was by the assembled chiefs of the country, those in alliance with Braw, appointed as his successor.

A dying chief often appoints his own successor by calling him and giving up to him the symbol of power. This done, he gives him a charge and *spits in his hand.* This last act is

the seal of his appointment. To us it looks very strange, but if they regard it sacredly, it is just as good as the long round of formalities which some other nations observe.

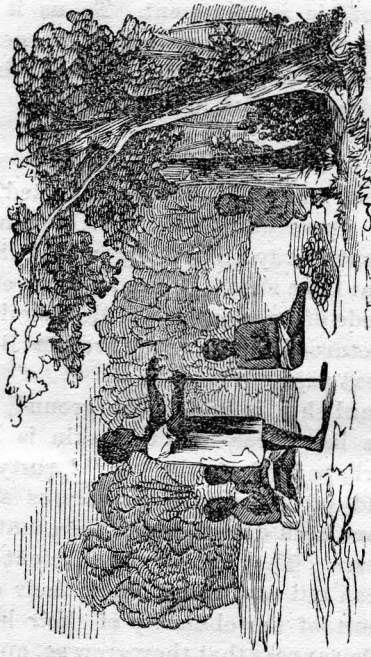
MODE OF SWEARING.

While so many chiefs were collected, they took the opportunity to swear together, in their country-way, that they would live in peace, that none should injure another, etc.

The mode of swearing is a little singular. I give a picture of it, drawn by brother Brooks, on the next page.

A leopard-skin is laid on the ground, at the root of a huge tree. On this skin is laid a heap (perhaps half a bushel) of old, rusty brass rings, and pieces of iron in various shapes, which have been dug up about the country for many years. They are of very ancient date; no one can tell any thing about their origin. On account of the obscurity of their history, the people suppose that they grew so, and hold them very sacred, worshiping and fearing them. The probability is, that they were brought by slave-traders, and given in exchange for slaves, perhaps hundreds of years ago. But this is only a conjecture.

Upon this heap are poured rice, and palm



MODE OF SWEARING.

oil as a sacrifice, before swearing. Then, while the master, or keeper of the rings, sits by them, the man who is to swear stands up before them, with a long cane, or staff in his hand, with which he keeps continually pounding on the ground in one place, and *swears*. This consists

in his protesting his innocence of any crime charged against him; or in promising thus and so—for instance to live in peace, not to injure any one, not to make war, or break the laws of the country. In connection with this, they call on God to witness their words, and to punish them if they speak falsely, or should break their promise. It is all done with the solemnity and earnestness of a man who feels his life at stake. They have a very superstitious fear of these rings, and believe that if they swear falsely, or break their word, a very bad sickness will fall upon them—a great trembling, and violent convulsions of the whole body, which will finally take them away. Thus they all swear. Then the keeper very carefully puts the articles, one by one, into his bag.

Every tribe has its own mode of swearing. The Krooman swears on salt; the Mandingo on his Koran; and others in other modes. Thus all have their modes of swearing, and I think they regard their oaths more than thousands do in America. He who will tell a lie will not be afraid to swear to it; and the man of truth need not swear. His word—his yea or nay—is to be believed before all the oaths in the world. How blessed to have such a char-

acter! It is worth more than all gold. May every reader have it. "Swear not at all." Yea and nay—simple affirmations that it is thus and so—is the Gospel rule, and "whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil," and weakens confidence with honest men, in the truth of what we say. "The life of truth shall be established."

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XXXIX.

CRUELTIES OF HEATHENISM.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

When a warrior, like Braw, dies, it is customary among the Mendi people to make up a large war against their enemies, in order to kill, and catch prisoners. According to their opinion, those of their enemies who are killed in the war, are thereby sent to the deceased as slaves. Those who are caught as prisoners, are taken to the grave, or behind the wall of the chieftain's town, and put to death, from time to time, as occasions require, with messages to the deceased, and sent to him as wives, servants, or slaves.

When this is done, the "cry" is usually "broken," as it is called, or "pulled;" that is, made a public matter, by firing guns, dancing, and feasting.

This almost universal custom among the Mendians, of thus making war to "pull the cry," will be dispensed with, in Braw's case, through the influence which the Gospel has already had upon them. Some of the warriors wished to observe it, but there was a general frown upon it by the influential chiefs, who respected the mission. This is good, and should encourage us. Should this custom be observed, it would inevitably plunge the whole country again into a general war. One reason which they assigned, why they should not make a war, was, that *Braw died making peace*, and that so it was not proper to "pull his cry" by a war. He would disapprove of it, if living.

An instance of the observance of this custom took place a little more than a year ago (about February, 1853), at Tassaw, on Big Boom river, not more than twenty-five miles from this station (Kaw Mendi), under the following circumstances:

The Boompeh war, in attempting to take an inland town, belonging to the Boom people, lost one of their most valuable, and beloved

generals, but succeeded in carrying the barricade, and took a very large number of prisoners. After they had buried their leader, they killed a number of prisoners on his grave, "to attend him as servants and wives." And being obliged to return homeward, to save a retreat they encamped at Tassaw. There, for the space of two weeks, *they killed twelve victims every morning, and twelve every evening*, under the pretence of sending them to their fallen leader. O heathenism! And when they found they must hurry home, to avoid being intercepted by the enemy, and feared that they would have to fight their way, as it was, and lose many of their captives, they took *over forty children and drowned them*, in order to send them to their leader by water! O heathenism! when will thy cruelties cease before the influence of a peace-making and loving gospel? On the occasion of the death of this one man, there must have been two hundred and fifty or three hundred persons sacrificed. Had not the Gospel already begun to exert its restraining, ameliorating influences on the Boompehs, probably thousands would have been sacrificed for Braw in a similar manner, and a general, long, destructive war been the consequence.

Mr. Brooks says, that Braw's "cry" is only

put off for a time, while abroad he is only said to be sick, not dead. This is done to give time to prepare for the cry. They will use this time to secure rice, fowls, sheep, goats, bullocks, etc., for provisions; and also to get fine clothes to wear, and large quantities of powder, for firing of guns on the occasion. The rainy season may pass before the "cry" will "break," as they call it. Then they will gather again, to feast, sing, dance, fire guns, etc., for many days. This will seem to you like a strange way to mourn for the dead. Yes, it is; but this is heathenism!

Mr. Brooks writes, "I am in no danger. They have hearts to feel for a lone 'stranger.' They often speak with much feeling of my situation, and of my love for them."

The blessed Gospel will work wonderful changes among them. Messengers who proclaim its glad tidings, are received by them with joy and gladness. Why shall they not have them? I will do what I can. What will you do?

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER XL.

ONE CLASS OF MISERIES ENDURED BY THE HEATHEN.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

In all this country the natives and missionaries suffer much from numerous and troublesome sores. Many of the natives are almost literally covered, from head to foot, with "putrefying sores," loathsome to behold, very offensive to the smell, and agonizing to the sufferers. There are a number of such now in our town. Doubtless some cases are hereditary; others are caused by bad, unwholesome living; others by impurity of life; and others from causes unknown. But I wish now to speak more particularly of suffering caused by a vicious course of life, cases of which are frequently seen as we go about the country.

When I was at Mo Tappan, I saw a woman whose appearance was exceedingly hideous and revolting. Nearly one whole half of her face was gone. Her nose, and the roof of her mouth were eaten out. One eye was left all bare, the flesh around it being consumed. She could not speak plainly, and went about begging a little to eat. The disease was still eating, and will doubtless yet fulfill, in an awful

manner, the scripture found in Prov. v: 11. Her case is an affecting comment on that verse of timely warning.

Mr. Brooks says, "Polygamy is the mother of the great portion of the ills of Africans. In almost every village and family, are seen persons of every age and condition, affected with the most loathsome and distressing diseases of which one can possibly conceive. Whole families, two or three generations distant, are to be met with, still suffering from all stages and nearly all varieties of this disease (Prov. v: 11). The flesh of some is covered with ulcers, resembling mature, active blisters. Others are covered with mammoth sores, resembling large scrofulous, or fever sores, discharging for years the most obnoxious matter conceivable. And if they ever, like volcanoes, happen to be inactive, it is only to gather strength for deeds of greater violence, shattering the poor miserable remains frightfully!

"Before you have given these a parting look, another class appears, with swollen limbs, the bones of the feet and hands protruding from the decaying flesh. Joint after joint falls to its mother earth, as they crawl from hut to hut for the scanty remains left by hungry children, until footless, handless, they bid farewell to

the ills of life, for the untried, unknown ills of an awful eternity.

"If you have failed to see the sad traces of disease in the countenance of the last, you can not fail to do so in the next, as he lies on his mat beneath a lowly shed. If, by chance, your eye falls upon him when asleep, or motionless, and you see the bones of the cheek, nose, teeth, or jaw-bone, bare, and perhaps one or both of his eyes decayed and fallen from their sockets, you will involuntarily think (if not exclaim), 'Oh, what neglect! How unfeeling and inhuman are the heathen! To what depths of degradation have they sunk, thus to allow the remains of a human being to lie uninterred, until the birds, or hogs, or cats, tear the flesh from the bones, or till by decay it falls from them!' But before these thoughts can more than form in the mind, you see *that body raise a handless limb*, to frighten away the swarms of flies that perpetually settle upon his wasting body. How are your feelings changed, from astonishment and horror, at the sight of a supposed lifeless body, to an indescribable mingling of pity, loathing, and wonder, at the suffering of a fellow mortal!"

Bro. Brooks says, that he would enter more fully into particulars, showing many other

cases of suffering, but I think that your nerves can not bear any more at present.* So I will turn for a time to more pleasing themes. It should be added, however, that I think it more than probable that some of the cases described by Bro. Brooks, are the effects of that fearful disease spoken of in the Bible, called *leprosy*, which prevails in this country. I have seen some horrible cases, where it was eating them up by inches, as we say.

But since the above are living facts, of every day occurrence, and sad results of sin, you should know them, and be stimulated to pray more, deny yourself more, and do more to send to the suffering people the "balm of Gilead," committed to your trust, to give to others. Will you do it? May such be the result.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

The missionaries also suffer from some of these varieties of sores, more than tongue or pen can describe in this world. Male and female often suffer very greatly, from ulcers, boils, etc. Sometimes we are nearly cripples for months. Bro. Brooks has suffered amaz-

* Many others suffer horribly in ways not suitable to be here described.

ingly. I suffered very much for three months, and now have a scar as large as my hand, the mark of one of those dreadful sores. At one time, I had on my own person fifty boils.

In all tropical countries, men are much more subject to such ills, than in colder climes. But people live there who have immortal souls—for whom the Saviour died. He suffered much for us, and shall we be unwilling to suffer for him in advancing his cause? Let it not be said. Wicked men go to Africa to make money, governed only by selfish motives. Shall Christians be found unwilling to go there, to save the perishing millions, for Christ's sake, though they must suffer? To admit it would be to disgrace the Gospel, and bring shame on the name of our dear Saviour. Africa must be redeemed and saved. To this end many missionaries must go, and labor, and suffer, and die, there. Who are they? Where are they? Reader are you one? May "the Lord of the harvest send forth more laborers into his harvest." "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

Ho! my sons and daughters, hasten!
Up, and gird your armor on;
Go to some benighted nation,
Where the light has never shone.
"I am with thee, I will help thee;"
Go, and make my Gospel known.

On my promises relying,
Go, and rude barbarians teach;
Every worldly lust denying,
Show in practice what you preach.
"I am with thee, I will keep thee;"
Go, a crown I'll give to each.

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